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Marie de Medicis

Queen of France

From the original Portrait in the Dresden Gallery

HENRY IV.

AND

MARIE DE MEDICI.

PART II.

OF

THE HISTORY OF THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.

KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

FROM NUMEROUS UNPUBLISHED SOURCES,
INCLUDING MS. DOCUMENTS IN THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE IMPÉRIALE,
AND THE ARCHIVES DU ROYAUME DE FRANCE, ETC.

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BY

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"THE LIFE OF MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME," "JEANNE D'ALBRET,"
"ELIZABETH DE VALOIS AND THE COURT OF PHILIP II.,"
"HENRY III., KING OF FRANCE," ETC.

"A cœur vaillant rien d'impossible."—LEGENDE DE HENRI IV.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME THE SECOND.

CHAPTER III.

1598—1599.

Departure from France of the cardinal-legate Alessandro de Medici—He takes farewell of the king at Fontainebleau—Events of the interview—The cardinal expresses his opinion relative to the marriage of the king with madame de Beaufort—Adventure of king Henry in the Forest of Fontainebleau—Le Grand Veneur—Arrival of the duke of Lorraine in Paris on a visit to Madame—Letter of Henry to Gabrielle d'Estrées—Departure of the king for Paris—Adventure of the ferry of the Quai Malaquais—Queen Marguerite—She refuses to sanction a divorce unless the king gives promise to abstain from espousing Gabrielle d'Estrées—Edict concerning the Jesuits—Affair of the Jesuit de Tournon—Synod of the Gallican clergy—Obtain audience of king Henry at Monceaux—Royal harangue pronounced by the king—Demise of the duchesse de Montmorency—Correspondence between the king and the constable de Montmorency—Demise of Philip II.—Departure of Albert archduke viceroy from Brussels—He relinquishes his cardinal's hat—Joins Marguerite of Austria at Innsbruck—Royal progress—Ceremonies in Ferrara on the marriage of Philip III. with the archduchess Marguerite—Interview between cardinal d'Ossat and the duke d'Aumale—Illness of Henri

Quatre—He is believed to be at extremity—Details—Recovery of the king—Cabals concerning the divorce and remarriage of the king—Departure of M. de Sillery for Rome—The king threatens queen Marguerite with attainder—Intrigues of the adherents of madame de Beaufort—Quarrel between MM. d'Epernon and de Rosny—Baptism of Alessandro de Vendôme—Magnificence of the pageant—Fêtes of the court—Rosny refuses to permit the appellation of *fils de France* to be given to the young prince—Anger of the duchesse de Beaufort, and the feuds which ensued—Cabals concerning the edict of Nantes—The Chambers seek the mediation of Gabrielle d'Estrées—Her reply—Details concerning the marriage of Madame—The Pope refuses to grant dispensation—Religious conference—Firmness of the princess—The duke de Bar—Debates respecting the solemnization of the marriage—Details—Marriage of Madame at St. Germain—Festivities of the court—Henriette de Balzac first appears at court—Madame de Beaufort, and the libels current respecting her *liaison* with king Henry—Audience of the president of the Parliament of Paris on the registration of the edict of Nantes—Harangue of king Henry—Effect of the royal menaces—Registration of the edict—The king appoints MM. de Schomberg and de Thou to carry out the clauses of the edict—Sudden death of the count de Schomberg 1

CHAPTER IV.

1599.

Negotiations of M. de Sillery in Rome—The duke de Joyeuse—He returns to his monastery—Le Père Ange—The royal divorce—Details—Gabrielle d'Estrées declares the certainty of her marriage with the king—Accompanies the king to Fontainebleau—Her return to Paris—M. Zamet—Illness of Gabrielle d'Estrées—Its mysterious origin—Demise of the duchesse de Beaufort—Correspondence on the event—Despair of Henri Quatre—Summons M. de Rosny—Suppositions on the origin of the malady of madame de Beaufort—Obsequies of the duchess performed in royal state—Her interment in the abbey church of Maubuisson—Sympathy manifested for the king—The Parliament offers condolence

—Letter of Madame—The answer made by the king to his sister—Queen Marguerite writes to the king and to M. de Rosny— The king visits Fontainebleau, where he gives audience to the condé de Villamediana and to the Franciscan Calatagirone—Affairs of Saluzzo—Mademoiselle d'Entragues —The king visits le Bois de Malesherbes—Designs of the Balzac family—Character of Henriette de Balzac—Her designs, and the weakness of the king—She demands a promise of marriage—Royal sojourn at Blois—Its objects—Designs of the duke de Biron—His league with the duke de Savoy—Death of the chancellor de Cheverny—Return of the king to Paris—Fêtes of the hôtel Zamet—Continuation of the negotiation for the king's divorce—Petition of the queen—Pope Clement appoints commissioners to investigate the affair—Reports and decision of these commissioners—Correspondence of queen Marguerite—Reluctance of the pope to ratify the decree of divorce—Sillery satisfies the scruples of the pontiff—The decree of divorce receives papal ratification—Letter of queen Marguerite to the king—Condition granted to the queen—Henriette de Balzac—She extorts a promise of marriage from Henri Quatre—Its tenor —Scene with M. de Rosny—Resolution demonstrated by the king—Mademoiselle d'Entragues is installed as *maîtresse à titre* 66

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

1599—1600.

Affairs concerning the marquisate of Saluzzo—The duke of Savoy visits the court of France—His objects—The duke de Biron—His disaffection and intrigues—Arrival of M. de Savoye at Fontainebleau—Details—His relations with M. de Biron and other malcontents—Conferences on the restitution of the marquisate of Saluzzo—Deportment of the duke of Savoy—Negotiations for the marriage of Henri Quatre—Marie de Medici, and the grand ducal family of Tuscany—Numerous suitors for the hand of the princess—Donna Eleonore Dori—Giovannini, envoy from the grand duke

Ferdinand, arrives in Paris—Discussions relative to the dowry of madame Marie—Mademoiselle d'Entragues—Fears inspired by her insolence and presumption—Attitude of her kindred—King Henry grants audience to the Tuscan envoy at Conflans, and authorizes a demand in form for the hand of Marie de Medici—Continuation of the conferences with the duke of Savoy—His departure from Paris, and perfidious intents—The Condé de Fuentes—M. de Rosny created grand-master of artillery—Domestic feuds of the duke and duchesse de Bar—Disquietude of Madame—The duke de Bar visits Rome—His errand, and its success—Marriage contract of king Henry—Entry of the French ambassadors into Florence by torchlight—Proclamation of the marriage—Deportment of the princess—First letter written by Henry IV. to his affianced consort—The reply of madame Marie—Imperious temper of the princess—She emancipates herself from the guidance of her kindred of Medici—Demands the appointment of Eleonore Dori in her household—Opinions of the potentates of Europe on the marriage between king Henry and Marie de Medici—Conference of Fontainebleau—Its religious import—Correspondence of the king with the duke d'Epernon and M. de Mornay with the duchesse de Bar—Henry bestows the castle and marquisate of Verneuil on mademoiselle d'Entragues—Departs for Lyons to superintend the warlike preparations for the invasion of the duchy of Savoy 133

CHAPTER II.

1600.

Correspondence between Henri Quatre and Marie de Medici—Arrival of ambassadors from Savoy at Lyons—Their prevarications—Henry declares war against the duke of Savoy, and his generals invade the ducal territories—The marshal de Biron—His discontent and intrigues—Policy of Philip III.—Success of the royal arms—Fall of the towns of Montmellian, Bourg, and Chambéry—Negotiations of the patriarch Calatagirone—Response of the king—Treasonable relations of Biron—His correspondence with Fuentes—Henry visits the camp of the marshal before Bourg—Conference with Biron—Regicidal projects of the latter—Correspondence

between Henry IV. and Marie de Medici—Progress of the campaign—Intrigues of madame de Verneuil—Affairs in Rome—Interview of cardinal d'Ossat with Clement VIII. —The latter offers his mediation—Entry of the duke de Bellegarde into Florence—Reception of the legate Aldobrandini—His address to the princess Marie—Marriage by proxy of Henry IV. with Marie de Medici—Sumptuous festivities—Eleonore Dori—She changes her name to Galigai —Concino Concini—His parentage—Departure of queen Marie from Florence—She embarks at Leghorn—Voyage and reception at Marseilles—Details—She refuses the attendance of her French ladies—Sojourn in Marseilles—Her resolution and uneasiness—Bids farewell to the duchesses of Tuscany and Mantua—Her entry into Avignon—Progress of the campaign—The cardinal-legate Aldobrandini confers with the condé de Fuentes and with the duke of Savoy—His journey to Chambéry, and reception by king Henry—Siege of fort Ste. Catherine—Entry of queen Marie into Lyons—Feuds and dissensions of her suite—Madame de Verneuil—Her letter to the king—Arrival of Henri Quatre in Lyons—Interview with his bride—Marriage solemnities—Stormy dissensions between the king and queen relative to the appointment of the household—Concern of the grand-duke—The cavaliere Vinta remonstrates with Marie—Her reply and displeasure 194

CHAPTER III.

1601.

Continuation of the negotiation for peace—The plenipotentiaries, and their ungracious demeanour—Suspension of the negotiation—Audience of the Spanish ambassador with king Henry—Insolence of the language used by the condé de Villamediana—Arrival of the duke de Biron in Lyons—He throws himself on the clemency of the king—Generosity of Henri Quatre—Resumption of the negotiations—Signature of the treaty concluded between the legate Aldobrandini and M. de Rosny—Henry leaves Lyons—He visits Fontainebleau, and the château de Verneuil—Illness and troubles of the duchesse de Bar—Journey of queen Marie de Medici—Her entry into Paris—Festivities—Her meeting with madame de

Verneuil—Details—Position of the queen—Visit of their majesties to la Foire de St. Germain—Dinner at the Arsenal—Biron renews his relations with Spain and Savoy—Conference of Como—The treaty of Lyons—Its reception by M. de Savoye, and final ratification—Eleonore Galigai—She conciliates the favour of madame de Verneuil—The queen honours the latter with her *bienveillance* under certain conditions—Appointment of Donna Eleonore as *dame d'atours*—Embassy from Venice—Henry visits Calais—Jealousies of the Spanish court—Siege of Ostend—Proposed interview between queen Elizabeth and Henri Quatre at Dover—Correspondence—M. de Rosny repairs to Dover—Important conference with queen Elizabeth—Mission of M. de Biron to the English court—Accouchement of queen Marie—Birth of Louis XIII.—Joy of France, and congratulations of foreign potentates—The grand duke of Tuscany declines the office of godfather to the dauphin—His reasons—Attempts to promote the abjuration of madame de Bar—Severity of the king—Spirited reply of Madame—Her constancy and sufferings—The duke de Biron at the English court—His conferences with queen Elizabeth—Queen Marie and madame de Verneuil—The latter takes up her abode in the Louvre with the consent of the queen—Splendid gala at court—Marriage of Eleonore Galigai and Concino Concini—Audacious wit of madame la Marquise—Her receptions in the Louvre—Melancholy and uneasiness of Marie de Medici—Demise of the queen-dowager Louise de Lorraine, and of other great personages. 255

CHAPTER IV.

1601—1602.

Rise of a new league—Its objects and abettors—The king resolves to visit the disaffected provinces—Power of M. de Rosny—Measures adopted by the latter to sift the origin of the conspiracy—M. Lafin is ordered to repair to court—Treacherous revelations of the latter—Journey of their majesties to Orléans—Clement intents of Henri Quatre—Rosny appointed governor of the Bastille—Sojourn of the court at Blois—Royal interviews with the dukes d'Epernon and Bouillon—Council extraordinary—Domestic dissensions of

the king and queen—Rosny acts as mediator—Occasion of the *fracas*—Reconciliation of the royal pair—Arrival of their majesties at Plessis-les-Tours—Mandate is despatched summoning the attendance at court of the duke de Biron—Enthusiasm for the king—Repeal of the obnoxious tax termed La Pancarte—The marshal de Biron obeys the royal summons—His arrival at Fontainebleau—Details—The king endeavours to extort confession from Biron by the offer of a free pardon—Contumacious refusals of the duke de Biron to acknowledge his treasonable dealings with the duke de Savoye and others—Arrest of the duke de Biron and of the count d'Auvergne—They are conveyed to the Bastille—Interrogatories of the duke de Biron—Efforts on his behalf—Sentence of death pronounced—Sentiments of king Henry on the crime, trial, and execution of the marshal duc de Biron. 309

HENRY IV.

AND

MARIE DE MEDICI.

CHAPTER III.

1598-1599.

Departure from France of the cardinal-legate Alessandro de Medici—He takes farewell of the king at Fontainebleau—Events of the interview—The cardinal expresses his opinion relative to the marriage of the king with madame de Beaufort—Adventure of king Henry in the forest of Fontainebleau—Le Grand Veneur—Arrival of the duke of Lorraine in Paris on a visit to Madame—Letter of Henry to Gabrielle d'Estrées—Departure of the king for Paris—Adventure of the ferry of the Quai Malaquais—Queen Marguerite—She refuses to sanction a divorce unless the king gives promise to abstain from espousing Gabrielle d'Estrées—Edict concerning the Jesuits—Affair of the Jesuit de Tournon—Synod of the Gallican clergy—Obtain audience of king Henry at Monceaux—Royal harangue pronounced by the king—Demise of the duchess de Montmorency—Correspondence between the king and the constable de Montmorency—Demise of Philip II.—Departure of Albert archduke viceroy from Brussels—He relinquishes his cardinal's hat—Joins Marguerite of Austria at Innsbruck—Royal progress—Ceremonies in Ferrara on the marriage of Philip

III. with the archduchess Marguerite—Interview between cardinal d'Ossat and the duke d'Aumale—Illness of Henri Quatre—He is believed to be at extremity—Details—Recovery of the king—Cabals concerning the divorce and remarriage of the king—Departure of M. de Sillery for Rome—The king threatens queen Marguerite with attainder—Intrigues of the adherents of madame de Beaufort—Quarrel between MM. d'Epernon and de Rosny—Baptism of Alessandro de Vendôme—Magnificence of the pageant—Fêtes of the court—Rosny refuses to permit the appellation of *fils de France* to be given to the young prince—Anger of the duchesse de Beaufort, and the feuds which ensued—Cabals concerning the edict of Nantes—The Chambers seek the mediation of Gabrielle d'Estrées—Her reply—Details concerning the marriage of Madame—The Pope refuses to grant dispensation—Religious conference—Firmness of the princess—The duke de Bar—Debates respecting the solemnization of the marriage—Details—Marriage of Madame at St. Germain—Festivities of the court—Henriette de Balzac first appears at court—Madame de Beaufort, and the libels current respecting her *liaison* with king Henry—Audience of the president of the Parliament of Paris on the registration of the edict of Nantes—Harangue of king Henry—Effect of the royal menaces—Registration of the edict—The king appoints MM. de Schomberg and de Thou to carry out the clauses of the edict—Sudden death of the count de Schomberg.

THE cardinal-legate, Alessandro de Medici, having gloriously negotiated, and presided at the ratification of the treaty of Vervins, made preparation to quit the kingdom, leaving the nuncio Gonzaga bishop of Mantua to watch over papal interests in France. Although the *entente cordiale* between the Papal and French cabinets was as yet maintained in all its integrity, yet questions were about to rise of grave import, likely perhaps to endanger those relations. The dispensation for the marriage of Madame

Catherine; the affair of his majesty's own divorce; the reception of the canons of Trent; the registration of the edict of Nantes; and the debates about to ensue in the parliament relative to the interpretation to be given to the treaty of Vervins as regarded the Jesuits, who claimed a right, in virtue of the treaty, to return—were matters in which the pacific and courtly cardinal dreaded to be involved. The rejoicings, therefore, to commemorate the Peace were no sooner over than the cardinal commenced his homeward progress, having accomplished his mission; conciliated the French people; and won the royal esteem. He therefore departed from Paris at the end of the month of August, 1598, and journeyed to Fontainebleau to pay a farewell visit to king Henry. Attended by M. de Soissons, and by a brilliant court, the king received the legate in La Cour du Cheval Blanc. The cardinal returned the royal greeting with much humility, and expressed his sense of the honour done him by so great a prince. Henry conducted the cardinal to his apartment, and presented him with a master key, which opened all the doors of the palace, "as," said the king "it is my will that your eminence shall command in my house as myself." After the banquet, the king, with M. de Sillery, then on the eve of his departure for Rome, held private conference with the legate. In this interview, the king partially revealed his views relative to his divorce and subsequent marriage. Henry commenced by thanking the prelate for his able and enlightened intervention in matters connected with the peace just concluded. His majesty proceeded to remark "that his satisfaction was diminished, inasmuch as he had no legitimate heir

to whom he might transmit the benefits and renown accruing from the acts, military and political, of his reign." The cardinal condoled with his majesty; but in fear of being involved in a controversy he deprecated, his eminence held out no hope that the king might obtain relief from the paternal sympathy of Rome. Sillery then alluded to the beauty and hopeful growth of César-Monsieur; which intimation Henry followed by eulogising the virtues, modesty, and accomplishments of madame Gabrielle. It was the design of the king to sound the views of the cardinal de Medici, aud to obtain for his mistress the good will of so important a member of consistory. "Sire!" exclaimed the cardinal, with great vivacity and resolution of manner, "it is enough to immortalize my humble life in having concluded peace between your majesties of France, Spain, and the Papal court. I could have wished that the first day of this happy period of tranquillity might have been the last of my life. I have fulfilled the duties and sole purpose of my legation. My instructions permit me not to take cognizance of other matters. I pray your majesty, therefore, to dismiss and permit me to return and lay at the feet of our Holy Father the minutes and papers connected with my august mission."[1] The king, who penetrated the motives of the cardinal, thereupon desisted from further confidences. But the manner of his eminence confirmed the idea previously inspired by the duchess, that the cardinal would not aid in the divorce unless it were to place his relative, Marie de Medici, on the throne of France. Sillery, therefore, received commands carefully to conceal the

[1] De Thou, liv. 120. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. fol. 1644. Supplement du Journal de Lestoile.

king's ulterior intents from the cardinal de Medici; the which he was alone to confide to cardinal Aldobrandini and other members of the pope's kindred. The precaution, however, was needless. The cardinal had seen enough to make him apprehend evil consequences from the "royal infatuation." He therefore expressed himself in strong language to M. de Soissons and to the other noblemen present at Fontainebleau, who on the following day escorted him to Moret. The cardinal, on taking leave, exhorted the nobles "to do all in their power to turn the king from a resolve degrading to the majesty of his crown, as pernicious to the realm.[1] That posterity would impute to their moral cowardice the ruin of the realm; as another war of succession on the demise of the king must ensue: and that as for himself he was making as much speed as possible from the kingdom to which he had given peace, in order not to witness or participate in an event fraught with consequences so ruinous." Words such as these, from the lips of a prelate eminent for moderation and virtue, produced sinister influence on the mind of the personages so addressed. The speech of the legate, whom Gabrielle instinctively feared and avoided, was fraught with dangers not then perhaps apparent to the future fate of the duchess. Henry affectionately embraced the cardinal on taking leave, and presented him with a diamond ring of the value of 6,000 crowns. "I will ever keep this precious pledge of your royal *bienveillance*, in memory, sire, of the greatest and most magnanimous prince in the universe!" said the cardinal.[2]

[1] Ibid.

[2] Journal de Henri IV. De Thou, liv. 120. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. fol. 1644.

The day following the departure of the legate Henry went to hunt in the forest of Fontainebleau, and there, it was said, beheld the apparition of the famed Grand Veneur and his phantom hounds. The chase proceeded merrily; when at a spot where four forest paths met, the king was startled by a crashing of branches, and by a blast of horns. Suddenly a pack of hounds in full cry, followed by one gigantic huntsman, dashed past the *cortége*, and disappeared amid the fastnesses of the forest. Henry commanded M. de Soissons to follow, and ascertain who the individual was, daring enough to interrupt the royal pastime; his majesty not attaching credit to the marvellous stories current concerning the spectral huntsman. Soissons presently returned, and tremblingly recounted, that as he was passing a brake of tangled briars and brushwood the gaunt form of the Grand Veneur sprang up before him. In hollow tones the phantom pronounced the mystic words: "*M'entendez vous; ou m'attendez vous?*" and vanished. The count described the figure as that of a man of gigantic stature, clad in black habiliments, with eyes like fiery embers! The king then returned to the palace; for as the story of this phantom of the Forest was profoundly believed on the testimony of the royal foresters, charcoal burners, and peasants of the district, no personage of the suite had heart or inclination to continue the sport.

The duke of Lorraine and his younger[1] son the

[1] The duke de Bar so lost heart in the austere presence of Madame, who took delight in summing up the ecclesiastical penalties which must befall him in case he persisted in his suit for her hand, that he took every occasion to avoid the court, though still making earnest demand for her favour by letter and deputy.

cardinal arrived in Paris during the month of September. The capital was then in a ferment relative to the sentence pronounced on Guillaume Rose bishop of Senlis, the once noted leaguer, for seditious speaking, "inasmuch as the said Guillaume Rose boasted of his late treasonable *liaison* with the Holy Union; and averred that he was again ready to join a similar combination: moreover, that the said bishop had been heard publicly to laud a virulent book intituled, 'Requête Catholique,' composed by Louis Picotté dit d'Orléans, an adherent of the Union." The bishop of Senlis had been graciously amnestied by the king for his unseemly alliance with the chieftains of the League; although he continued to demonstrate a spirit both turbulent and hostile. The friends of the prelate excused his violence on the plea of partial insanity; nevertheless, de Harlay, the king's zealous first president, deemed it imperative to check the ribald tongue of the prelate. The high court, therefore, sentenced the bishop of Senlis to appear at the bar of the Chambers and apologize for his seditious speeches; he was moreover, mulcted in a fine of 1,000 gold crowns; and suspended for a year from his episcopal functions. Paris echoed with the protests and denunciations of Rose and his adherents; nevertheless, the bishop was compelled to submit to the literal execution of his sentence—the alternative offered, being exile and degradation.[1]

The king wrote to notify his intention of visiting Monceaux, *en route* for Paris, to madame la Duchesse —though he had no cheering communication to make relative to his conference with the late cardinal-legate. Henry sent the following letter:—

[1] De Thou. Journal de Henri IV.

The King to Madame Gabrielle d'Estrées.

"MES BELLES AMOURS—Two hours after the arrival of the messenger, who brings you this, you will behold a cavalier who adores you, and whom people call King of France and Navarre, a title, certes, honourable, though very irksome in effect. The appellation of 'your subject' is much more pleasurable—nevertheless, as all these titles are desirable, arrange them as you will; for I have no intention of ceding any. I see by your letter the haste you are making to go to St. Germain. I am glad that you agree with my sister; as this is the most convincing testimony that you can offer to me of your favour, which, believe, I prize more than life, although I love myself well. I shall write no more, as we are soon to meet. *Bonjour, mon tout.* I kiss your beautiful eyes a million of times. This 12th day of September: from our delicious Desert of Fontainebleau."[1]

The king spent a week at Monceaux, and then repaired to Paris to welcome the duke of Lorraine and his son, who were, however, to be the guests of Madame at her hôtel de Soissons. The object of the duke's visit was to sign the marriage contract of M. de Bar; and if possible to conciliate the princess, and to persuade her to listen to the exhortations and teachings of Catholic divines. The king and his suite dined at the house of Le Petit More, a celebrated *traiteur* of the period, at three crowns the head: his majesty supped and passed the night at the hôtel of the *millionnaire* Zamet; and there won the sum of 3,000 crowns at dice with the count d'Auvergne and the duke d'Epernon. The following day an amusing incident happened to the king on his return from paying a brief visit to St. Germain. Henry crossed

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. 407.—Lettres Missives de Henri IV. Journal de Henri III.,—Etoile.

the river at the ferry close to the Quai Malaquais. As his majesty was simply attired, and attended only by two gentlemen, the ferryman did not recognize him. The king, therefore, commenced a conversation by asking the man, what he thought of the peace of Vervins? "Ma foi, I do not comprehend this fine peace," replied the boatman, "there are taxes on everything—even this miserable boat is taxed; I have something to do to eke out a livelihood." "But the king means soon to diminish these taxes," said Henry. "The king is a good man enough; but he has got a mistress, who wears so many fine gowns and gauds that there is no end to her expense—and we pay for them all! Even if she belonged to his majesty alone, the fact might be some consolation: but report tells strange stories of this said lady!" The king laughed — and, stepping from the boat, departed without paying his toll: upon this the man pursued the party, and clamorously demanded his *sou*, using expletives which seemed to afford still greater amusement to the king. At length some passer, a spectator of the scene, seized the ferryman by the collar, and pronounced the name of the cavalier whom he was abusing with such vigour. The effect was instantaneous: the man, believing that his life would be the forfeit of his temerity, dropped down, and was carried back to his boat in a swoon. For a few days he heard nothing of the incident: meantime, the duchess de Beaufort arrived at St. Germain, when the king caused the man to be arrested and conveyed to the château. There he was conducted into the royal presence. With the king sat madame la Duchesse. Henry beckoned to him, and commanded him, if he valued his life, to repeat the slanders which he had ventured to

utter on the previous day. The man tremblingly obeyed; and, falling on his knees, prayed for pardon. "You deserve to be hanged for your mendacity," replied the duchess; and, turning to the king, she requested him so to decree. Henry, however, from whose eyes tears were falling in excess of mirth, replied, "No! no! *ma maitresse*, do you not understand that famine and poverty have irritated this poor devil? He has only repeated what he heard, and is not malignant. I pardon him; his boat shall no longer be taxed; then, madame, he will shout loud enough, 'Vive Henri! Vive Gabrielle!'"[1]

This adventure, which Henry delighted to recount, gave the king diversion from the *ennui* attendant on the negotiations connected with the marriage of Madame. The princess treated her future father-in-law with disdainful *hauteur*—which contempt the duke de Lorraine took in good part, moved by his anxiety to complete the alliance. Every pecuniary and domestic arrangement likely to ensure the comfort and approval of Madame was granted. Madame, nevertheless, continued diligently to attend *le prêche*, and to give audiences to her chaplains; all of whom, it was known, counselled her highness to oppose a determined resistance to the Lorraine alliance; and to insist upon being permitted to retire again into Béarn. The hope now of the princess and her counsellors was, that in the event of the pope refusing dispensation, no priest or prelate of the realm would venture to perform the nuptial ceremony. On the first Sunday after the arrival of M. de Lorraine and his son the cardinal, the princess held a *prêche* in the ball-room of her hôtel. Whilst the service was being performed, the trumpeters of the

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. fol. 1644. Journal de l'Etoile.

duke began to flourish, and the kettle-drums beat, in order to collect the retainers of Lorraine, to attend their master to the Louvre. Madame immediately sent a message commanding silence; and that the retainers of M. de Lorraine should vacate the court of her hôtel until her service terminated. The cardinal de Lorraine, also, accidentally passed the apartment in which the assembly was holden, the folding doors of which had been purposely left open. His eminence turned aside his head; but, pausing on the threshold, reverently made the sign of the cross.[1]

During Henry's residence in Paris, letters arrived from queen Marguerite addressed to M. de Rosny; who had written to her majesty by command of the king to ascertain whether Marguerite's sentiments were still in favour of her divorce; which Rosny notified the king was about to pursue, now that the way seemed opened by his reconciliation with the Holy See. Rosny dextrously requested the queen's aid and concurrence in the measure; or that her majesty would intrust him with powers and explanations to promote her reconciliation with her royal husband. He next dwelt on the necessity that an heir should be born to France: and put the question to her majesty whether she would not aid in conferring this supreme benefit on France, in case she believed that insuperable obstacles intervened to render her own reunion with the king impossible, or inexpedient? Marguerite frankly responded to Rosny's cautious epistle. She promised to co-operate in every measure likely to redound to the good of the realm, or to the benefit of his majesty personally. The queen does not name the word "divorce" in her letter; but promises to be guided

[1] Ibid. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

by the counsels of Rosny and other of his majesty's loyal subjects. She desired, however, in case appeal to the Holy See should be decided upon, herself to present the petition praying for the dissolution of her marriage. The king was gratified beyond measure at this response; not perceiving the reserve and *arrière-pensée* in Marguerite's mind, "M'amye," thereupon wrote his majesty, "I felt conviction that you would not retract that which you before promised me. I am gratified to receive your assurances: and beg to assure you that I on my part adhere solemnly to all the engagements I have offered for your acceptance."[1] Very different, however, was the letter addressed by queen Marguerite to Rosny after the departure of Sillery on his mission to Rome; when her majesty received assurance from all quarters that the envoy was not employed alone in seeking the dissolution of her marriage; but had instructions to solicit the solemn legitimization of Henry's natural children, and dispensation to enable the king to espouse their mother.

At the end of the month, September, 1598, Henry returned to Monceaux to receive a deputation of the clergy of the realm, who, after the departure of the legate de Medici, had assembled to confer by royal permission in Paris. The approaching presentation of the edict of Nantes to the parliament, and the decisions taken by the High Court on the petition of the Jesuits; and more especially on the sentence passed by the Chambers on Louis Juste de Tournon, a member of the Society, afforded subject of debate and solicitude to the prelates of the Gallican church. The Jesuit communities banished from

[1] Berger de Xivrey—Lettres Missives, t. 4. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1009.

Paris, by the decree of 1594, and from all the chief provincial districts, were yet tolerated in the papal jurisdiction of Avignon, and in that of the parliaments of Toulouse and Bordeaux. To obtain the reversal of the edict which exiled them from Paris and its wealthy district had been the aim of the Jesuits during the last four years. Every influence and resource had been employed to gain the suffrages of the principal members of the High Court. Rome espoused the cause of the persecuted communities; and but for the remonstrances of d'Ossat, and the dread of totally losing jurisdiction over France, the pope would have insisted on the restoration of the Order to its lost privileges, as one of the conditions of Henry's absolution. The chancellor Cheverny steadily opposed the reversal of the decree of 1594; while a large majority of the Chambers, led by the eloquent Arnauld, denounced the pernicious teaching of the reverend fathers. The cardinal de Medici, during his abode in France, had neglected no opportunity to allay the fierce hostility which the Jesuit constitutions everywhere evoked throughout the realm, the southern provinces excepted. On his departure, therefore, the Jesuit de Tournon, on the command of his superiors, ventured to test the popular disposition in regard to the Order; and whether the clauses of the edict rendering it penal for a Jesuit to be found within certain districts of France would be enforced. The parliament acted with decision and alacrity; and condemned de Tournon to suffer the pains and penalties he had so rashly incurred.

The Chambers moreover launched a second decree still more stringent, prohibiting persons from sending their children to be educated in foreign Jesuit insti-

tutions. The parliament of Toulouse made an audacious attempt to annul the decrees of the parliament of Paris; and a deadly feud was about to commence between the two high courts, when the king by royal mandate interfered. His majesty confirmed the sentence of the parliament of Paris; and reserved the petition of the Jesuits for the decision of the privy-council. The chief point of discussion, however, by the synod which met in Paris, was the reception of the articles of Trent. The canons had been proclaimed by the states of 1593 at the command of the duke de Mayenne, and the cardinal-legate Landriano. An informality in the wording of the decree had suspended the execution of the edict: the king, moreover, had not sanctioned the abolition of the Concordat of Francis I. by sign-manual. Upon these important matters, therefore, a deputation of clergy sought audience of the king at Monceaux. Their spokesman was François de Guesle, archbishop of Tours. The address first admonished the king on the declension of morality, and the scandalous abuses everywhere prevalent. The clergy next prayed his majesty to give due authorization to the Tridentine enactments and discipline; to abolish the Concordat, which gave the crown the pernicious power of nomination to vacant benefices; to restore the sacred edifices of the realm; and to cause all previous and future conventions with the clergy to be religiously observed. The last article prayed his majesty to abolish the system of expectancies, survivorships, and the presentation of ecclesiastical benefices as the reward of military and civil services.

The recital of the archbishop greatly moved the king, who deemed it insolent and unreasonable that

the prelates, whose own fierce partisanship during the troubles had complicated affairs, should now gravely lay these grievances to his charge. "In truth, messeigneurs," said Henry, "what you say is pertinent. I am not the author of these abuses; the evil existed before my time. During the war, where the fire burnt most fiercely, there was I found to extinguish it. Peace has now been happily restored; and I will not fail in my duties during the prevalence of peace. I know that religion and justice are the foundation and columns upon which the realm is reared: even did I not acknowledge this truth, I would have established legitimate order. By the help of God, the church shall flourish as she did a century ago; and I trust to satisfy your aspirations by acting upon the dictates of my own conscience. The change, however, must be gradual; Paris was not built in a day. Set a good example to the people, messeigneurs; and exhort them to well-doing, earnestly as they have previously been incited to evil. You exhort me to perform my duty —I admonish you to fulfil your offices. Let us both do well—you in your calling; I in mine! My predecessors have formerly addressed you in fine words, uttered in magnificence and state: I, clad only in my grey doublet, will perform that which I promise. *Je n'ay qu'une jaquette grise. Je suis gris par le dehors, mais tout doré au dedans!* I am true, and my words are sterling. I will reflect on your demands, and decide according to the advice of my lords of the privy-council." [1] The deputation retired; the members being highly dissatisfied at the facetious tone with

[1] Journal de Henri IV.—L'Estoile. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. Péréfixe. Lettres Missives de Henri IV.—Berger de Xivrey.

which the king had responded to their grievances; and that no promise more satisfactory than that of referring their petition to the privy-council could be extorted from the royal lips. Henry, however, subsequently conversed with the chief prelates of the deputation; and even condescendingly showed them "his buildings and plans for the adornment of Monceaux." The answer of the king excited speculation and discussion amongst all classes: by many the liberal tendencies of the government were deplored. Other persons, more enlightened, rejoiced that France had at length a king able and powerful enough to legislate for the welfare of the realm; and to withstand the dicta and exaction of any especial class—and above all, the ultramontane zeal of the priesthood, fostered by the recent divisions. The parliament of Paris especially hailed the decision of the king, in the affair of the Jesuits; and in the attempt to extort from his majesty the acceptance of the decrees of Trent—a question which had been so often and fruitlessly agitated.

An event of horror and mystery meantime diverted for a season the attention of the Parisians from the consideration of the policy of their king. The beautiful young duchesse de Montmorency, wife of the constable, died suddenly, after an illness of three days. The whispers long current respecting the unhallowed practices of the duchess Louise, who was suspected, in this credulous age, of having made pact with the Evil one,[1] to obtain the hand of the chief of Montmorency, greatly increased the awe

[1] "On disoit à la cour qu'elle s'etoit donnée au diable pour epouser M. le Connétable; et que César un Italien, qui passoit pour magicien à la cour, avort été l'entremetteur de ce pacte"—Tallement des Reaux—Historiette xv.

inspired by the incident. The haughty reserve of madame de Montmorency, and her coldness of demeanour, combined to give confirmation to the story prevalent respecting her demise. It was related by certain great ladies, who were conversing with the duchess in her cabinet at the period of her seizure, that, whilst they talked, an attendant entered to announce a visitor, who asked for a private and immediate interview. The duchess demanded a description of the person who so presumed. The lady answered that the individual was a man of gigantic stature, enveloped in a black mantle. Madame de Montmorency thereupon uttered a faint cry, and fell weeping on a couch. After an interval she sent to request the cavalier to postpone the interview, and to depart. The reply received by the duchess was, that unless madame la Connétable appeared, he should seek her wherever she might choose to retire. The duchess in perturbation and horror then rose and quitted the room. She returned at the expiration of a quarter of an hour, faint and scarcely able to articulate. Falling on the neck of one of the ladies present, her most intimate friend, the duchess, weeping, took leave of her, "as she should converse no more in this world." Madame de Montmorency then sank to the ground, and was carried to her chamber in strong convulsions. Such was the story everywhere related—the gross superstition of the age inspiring firm belief in the diabolical identity of Madame de Montmorency's mysterious visitant. That the duchess was seized with premature labour, after an interview with some unknown personage, however, was ascertained beyond doubt. One contemporary alone throws light upon this tragic incident, and insin-

uates that the duchess came unfairly to her end; and that, "through the barbarous jealousy and cruelty of certain grandees, traitors to their nearest kin—who are the true devils risen straight from hell, which figure in the relation of the death of this unfortunate lady." To explain this mysterious intimation is not easy. The virtue of the duchess had never been suspected; though the passion with which she had inspired the marshal de Biron was everywhere patent.[1] The constable was a man of stern unbridled passion—obstinate in his convictions as his father, and liable to sinister impressions. He had raised his wife from comparative obscurity to a rank second only to that of a royal princess; and perhaps resented the admiration with which she had inspired M. de Biron—if his jealousy, in this age of universal licence, had no more stable foundation. The previous and subsequent matrimonial careers of the constable inspire little confidence in his justice or humanity. His first wife, Antoinette de la Marck, Montmorency, then duke de Damville, offered to poison or to repudiate, to gain the hand of Mary Stuart: his third wife,[2] the aunt of madame de Montmorency whose demise has just been recorded, the constable espoused, and at the expiration of three months banished her to his castle of Merù; and failing to obtain the divorce he solicited, detained the duchess a captive to the end of his life. The

[1] It was whispered that the marshal de Biron and the young duchesse de Montmorency had agreed to marry on the demise of the constable, who was double the age of his wife; and that Biron had asked the king to sanction the design, and to bestow upon him the sword of constable and the other honours of Montmorency.

[2] Laurence de Clermont, daughter of the count de Montoison.

demise of the duchesse Louise was lamented with great outward desolation by the constable, so as to enlist the fervent sympathy of the king; who addressed the following letter to Montmorency:—

A mon Compère, the Constable of France.

"Mon Compere—I have been informed by the Sieur de Laurans of the sudden loss which has befallen you—the which must be keenly felt, as you thereby lose the society of a person so dear to you. Nevertheless, we must submit to the will of God: the which your age, past sorrows, and experience ought, mon compère, to admonish you. I should repair myself to console you in this keen and deplorable sorrow, was it not that to-morrow I have to touch sick persons, who arrive in such numbers that already there are here fifteen hundred! I therefore send the S. de Praslin to you express, with orders to return to-morrow early; so that if your friends judge that my presence can alleviate or soothe your grief, I shall without delay put my foot in the stirrup and hasten to console you. Mon compère, my grief for your affliction takes from me power to indicate my participation therein. I pray God, therefore, to console you, and to have you in His Holy Keeping. This 28th day of September, at Monceaux.

"Henry."[1]

The king wrote several other letters of condolence and exhortation to the constable, whom he invites to spend an interval at Monceaux; "*car la maitresse de céans vous verra de bon oeil.*" Montmorency, however, persisted in remaining at Chantilly to spend All Saints' Day, his *jour de fête*, in solitude and meditation. No investigations were made into the circum-

[1] Lettres Missives, t. 5. Bibl. Imp, F. de Béth—MS. 9063, fol. 6.

stances of the demise of the duchess; nor was the nature of the mysterious conference which preceded her illness revealed, though its reality was attested by the ladies, her companions. The duchess left two children, a son and one daughter; whose loveliness of person was hereafter proclaimed the counterpart of her mother's charms.

The demise of the king of Spain was the next topic of public comment. Philip expired in his palace of El Escorial, on Sunday September 13th, after an agonizing malady which lasted nearly a year. The death of the monarch whose fiat ruled the cabinets of Europe during the latter half of the sixteenth century; and whose *bienveillance* had been solicited with abject veneration by all the potentates of the civilized world—the queen of England excepted—excited scarcely average interest. The demise of Philip II. had been so often announced, that when the event really occurred, its truth was universally disbelieved: "no persons gave themselves trouble now to believe an assertion about which all were careless: nevertheless, during the troubles such was the public anxiety for the death of the king, that his majesty was killed and resuscitated at least three or four times during the year." The spirit which had organized so stupendous a religious despotism was breathed forth in a little chamber adjacent to the tribune over the high altar of the church of St. Lorenzo, where Philip, prostrate on his face, had so often worshipped. Philip died pressing to his lips the crucifix which had been used by the emperor Charles V., and by his adored wife, Elizabeth de Valois, during their last moments.[1]

[1] Salazar de Mendoza—Monarquia de España, lib. 5. Cabrera Vida de don Felipe II.

Such was the robust health of the king of Spain, during the greater part of his life, that he had never known sickness; he had, however, been subject to sudden faintings, resembling epileptic seizures, like his father the great emperor. To a mind imperious and self-sufficing Philip II. united a fervour and zeal for the mandates of the Faith, never before demonstrated, nor since surpassed by any potentate. His narrow and arbitrary spirit fashioned its rule of faith; interpreted the decrees of the church; and bowed before its ideal with a sanguinary zeal which nothing could relax—not even the express and often merciful mandates of the Holy See. Honour and humanity were abstract theories in Philip's esteem when measured by some fancied advantage to his faith. From his dreamy vigils in the cells of El Escorial Philip issued, persuaded of the favour of Heaven, and ready to make personal sacrifice, however excruciating, to insure a continuance of Divine favour: thus exhibiting the terrible spectacle of a heart misled by erroneous interpretation of things divine; dead to human pity or remorse; yet kindling at the contemplation of holy mysteries; and outwardly fervent in prayer and meditation. The political career of Philip II. presents the same anomaly; in his testament the king avows the defeat of his lofty pretensions; and the impossibility of realizing the vast schemes of Charles V., which aimed at the subjugation of the nations of Europe, under the universal suzerainty of the Spanish crown; and the toleration of but one faith. Philip II. confesses that his schemes on America, and for the conquest of the British Isles, were failures; and that he had expended 20 millions in equipping the Great Armada which was to cast Elizabeth of England

into the prisons of the Holy Office.[1] He deplores the want of success which attended his efforts to subjugate France[2] and the Low Countries. Finally, the king avows that these his ambitious projects had cost him the sum of six hundred millions of ducats; and the sacrifice of the lives of twenty millions of men.

The archduke Albert, meantime, ignorant of the extremity of his Catholic majesty, resigned the vice-regal functions to André cardinal bishop of Coutance, on the proclamation of the peace of Vervins, and quitted Brussels on the 14th of September, the day following the demise of Philip II. Albert had previously received the oath of the states of the southern provinces on behalf of Doña Isabel. Richardot made a discourse in the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville, in which the deputies assembled, to accept the act of abdication of his Catholic majesty; and to ratify the conditions which the deed contained. Philip declared his resolution to give the serene Infanta in marriage to her cousin archduke Albert, with the Netherlands, Holland, Luxembourg, and the duchy of Burgundy for her dower—these royalties to be enjoyed conjointly by Doña Isabel and by her future husband. The limitations were, that in case these sovereignties should hereafter devolve on a princess, she should espouse the king of Spain, or the heir of his said majesty: and that no prince or princess should marry without the consent of the Spanish

[1] The king, while reviewing his foreign policy when on his death-bed, is said to have exclaimed, "Pacem cum Anglo, bellum cum reliquis."

[2] The intrigues and designs of Spain cost France the sum of 150 millions, according to the calculation of the duke de Sully.

king. In default of issue of the lineage of the serene Infanta, the state of the Netherlands was to return to the crown of Spain. The Infanta and her consort engaged to prohibit their subjects from trading to the Indies; to tolerate alone the Roman Apostolic Faith; and publicly to acknowledge that in case they or their heirs should fail in the execution of this, or any other article of the compact, the sovereignty was forfeited again to Spain. The archduke first took the oath of allegiance to the Infanta, the formula being administered by the archbishop of Malines. The deputies then approached, and tendered allegiance to the serene Doña Isabella,—"the cardinal viceroy receiving the oath with a gracious smile, amid the sounding of trumpets, addressing affable words to all." The conditions upon which the new sovereigns entered upon their royalty were deemed illiberal enough by the Flemish people; but in their anxiety to be rid of Spanish bondage, any stipulations were welcomed. Philip had signed the act on the 6th day of May, 1598, in the presence of his son Don Philip, and the Infanta; also his majesty had then affixed his signature to the marriage contract of prince Philip with the archduchess Marguerite, niece of the emperor, and daughter of Ferdinand archduke of Grätzen. Fondly as Doña Isabel was cherished by her royal father, yet Philip dismembered the fair provinces of Flanders from the crown of Spain with regret and reluctance. Hence he ingeniously fettered his renunciation with stipulations upon the violation of which the provinces were to be reunited to the Spanish monarchy. "It is very true," wrote Philip in the famous Instructions which he bequeathed to his son, "that I have given the Low Countries to your sister, but there are a hun-

dred evasions of the bequest possible, of which in time you may avail yourself!" Rome meantime forwarded to the archduke dispensation from his vows, and permission to marry—being the second[1] licence so granted by the Holy See within a period of twenty years. On the 14th of September, therefore, Albert quitted Brussels, and proceeded, robed in full pontificals, to Notre Dame de Halle, a church three miles from the capital. There the archduke divested himself of his priestly vestments, and deposited each with prayer on the altar beneath the shrine of a miraculous image of the Madonna. He then gave alms, and offered large donations to the church, which he quitted at sunset, and took the road to Luxembourg. From thence the archduke journeyed to Innsbruck, where he was to meet and escort the young *fiancée* of Don Philip to Ferrara, in which city the two marriages were to be performed by proxy in the presence of pope Clement. At Sterczingen, in the Tyrol, the news of the demise of Philip II. reached the archduke. Albert and his future sister-in-law assumed mourning attire; while Marguerite received the honours of queen-elect. A brief sojourn at Trent during the first week of mourning was the only homage given to the memory of the catholic king by the affianced consorts of his two children. The progress of the princess through Italy was sumptuous —every potentate and wealthy town received the young bride with extraordinary honours; and everywhere the envoys of France were foremost in congratulation. On the 13th of November the princess arrived at Ferrara, where pope Clement was sojourn-

[1] The first licence was in favour of the grand duke of Florence, Ferdinand, formerly cardinal de Medici, who espoused Christine de Lorraine, after his accession to sovereign power, in 1598.

ing, attended by d'Ossat, then just elevated to the cardinalate, with Bellarmine, also recently honoured with the purple, and eighteen chief members of the Sacred College.[1] On Sunday following the entry of the princess into Ferrara, the ceremony of betrothal was performed in the cathedral by the pope in person —the archduke Albert espousing the princess Marguerite in the name of Philip III., king of Spain. The same ceremony was then repeated for the affiancing of the archduke with Doña Isabel, who was represented by the duke of Sessa. D'Ossat, in his letters, gives an animated description of the gorgeous ceremonies and banquetings; the pope being resolved to lavish every honour on the bride of the Catholic king; and on the elect husband of so pious a princess as Doña Isabel. The royal affianced continued their journey, and made a sojourn of two months in Milan, pending the solemnization of the funeral obsequies of Philip II. They then sailed from Genoa at the commencement of February, 1599, and landed at Bisnaros, after a rough voyage, on the 27th of March, where the marriages were solemnized on the 18th of April in the cathedral of Valencia.[2] During the sojourn of the queen of Spain and the archduke in Ferrara, cardinal d'Ossat writes to Villeroy to communicate the particulars of two interviews which he had had with the outlawed duke d'Aumale, who continued to be profuse in his expressions of desire for reconciliation with Henri Quatre; and yet de-

[1] The details of the picturesque pageants and festivities which ensued appertain not to the history of Henri Quatre. The style even of d'Ossat kindles as he relates the honours and ceremonies bestowed on the young Marguerite by his Holiness.

[2] Salazar de Mendoza—Vida de don Felipe III., Rey de España—Monarquia de España.

meaned himself in the manner most likely to give offence to the king. Aumale was *en route* for Spain in the suite of the archduke; he had adopted Spanish usages and language; and spoke of Doña Isabel as "his gracious mistress." "The said duke," says d'Ossat, "spoke to me with wisdom, and modestly; he professed his affection for the king; excused his journey to Spain in the suite of the queen and the archduke; and demonstrated that he had not by any means shown himself the most hostile chief of the League. He complained of the rigour with which he had been treated by the parliament, after he had sent a gentleman to pray his majesty to pardon and to receive him into favour." The duke also falsely said that Henry had rendered his pardon conditional on his success in interceding for the famous Antonio Perez, ex-secretary of state to Philip II.—an assertion which no documents extant confirm. The true reason that Aumale benefited not by the amnesty of the king, was his own obdurate demand for pardon, while Spanish weapons remained in his hand. He asked that his king should make the first overtures of reconciliation by annulling all penalties resulting from his outrageous treason; and restore to him the governments and important offices conferred by the late king, without exacting any precise pledge or promise of future fealty. Even Henry's generous spirit was angered by the surly egotism displayed by the duke d'Aumale: and his majesty finally ratified the sentences of exile and confiscation, which rendered the duke a pensioner for life on the bounty of Spain and his patrons the archdukes.

At the commencement of the month of October, 1598, France was again agitated by the serious illness of her king. The burdens of royalty were keenly

felt by Henry, who, despite his merry humour, was often a prey to gnawing disquietude when affairs went contrary to his desire. The fatigues which he had suffered during the siege of Amiens; his campaign in Bretagne; and the excitement of the festivities which inaugurated the peace of Vervins, now told on his constitution. Another cause was domestic trouble; the king's attachment to Gabrielle d'Estrées was thwarted by his great nobles; who intimated, as plainly as they dared, their resolve never to accept the duchess as the legitimate wife of their sovereign. After Henry's return to Monceaux, profound melancholy took possession of his spirit. His letters to the duchess, who remained with Madame at St. Germain, complain of depression which none of his usual pursuits could dissipate. "I cannot, *mon cher cœur*, surmount my melancholy: nothing can dissipate it, I feel assured, but your society," wrote the king. The following day Henry, feeling extremely unwell, sought to dispel *ennui* by playing at pall-mall, with Bellegarde. His majesty wrote to Rosny to tell him of his indisposition; adding, that he had taken remedies, and trusted soon to recover, but wished the latter to visit him at Monceaux, bringing with him Châtillon and d'Incarville. During the day, while talking to Bellegarde, and laughing as he perused a scurrilous lampoon, circulating in Paris, Henry suddenly fell forwards on a couch, complaining of excruciating pains in the head and limbs. Bellegarde caused his royal master to be carried to his bed; and despatched expresses to Paris to summon MM. de Marescot, Martin, and Rosset, all famous physicians. He also sent to the dukes de Joyeuse and de Montpensier, the count d'Auvergne, the duke

d'Epernon, and to M. de Rosny, to intimate the condition of his master, whose case was deemed alarming by La Rivière, Henry's physician-in-ordinary, who was well acquainted with the king's constitution. The king, meanwhile, continued to suffer from faintness and delirium; while dangerous symptoms, accompanied towards the evening by distressing prostration of strength, confirmed every sinister apprehension. Letters were thereupon despatched to St. Germain to advertise Madame of the condition of the king. The duke de Mayenne and M. de Bellièvre, meantime, took measures for maintaining the tranquillity of the capital. The city gates were closed; the parliament assembled; and the members of the privy-council then in Paris met in the Louvre. The people wailed and lamented the menaced catastrophe; while the streets in the vicinity of the gate leading to the high road to Meaux were blocked up by anxious expectants. At dawn Montpensier appeared; the duke having ridden post from Monceaux to reassure the Parisians by intelligence that during the early part of the night the condition of the king had improved; and that his majesty was then conscious, having recognized Rosny. Madame, meanwhile, who had made preparation for prompt retreat into Béarn in case her brother's malady proved fatal, relinquished her intention on the news brought by Montpensier, and repaired to her hôtel de Soissons, where a *prêche* was convened to pray for the recovery of the king. Gabrielle d'Estrées, meantime, set out with her little son César for Monceaux. In vain it was represented to the duchess that etiquette and propriety demanded her absence from what might be the deathbed of the king. The duchess replied: "His majesty is at my château: no one can deny me admission to my own

house. Let my lords of the privy-council exclude me from the chamber of *mon roy*, on their own responsibility!" The arrival of the duchess gladdened the king; who sent her salutations as mistress of Monceaux, and hostess of all the inmates of her château. "Mon ami," said the king one day to Rosny, who was bending with more than usual solicitude over his royal master during an interval of pain, "you know that I have no craven fear of death, you who have seen me incur perils of magnitude and doubtful issue. I cannot, however, hide my grief at the prospect of leaving my kingdom and my people, without having been able to testify my love and sympathy." After a week of suspense Henry's strong constitution rallied: the inflammation from which he had suffered subsided, and the malady was pronounced vanquished by his majesty's chief physicians.[1] The king was exhorted by the latter to take greater care of his health. Henry's habits were irregular—he ate whenever inclination prompted; and never really dined at a regular hour, though compelled by etiquette to appear to take his chief repast in public. He had a passion for oysters, of which he partook sometimes immoderately. Of fruit he also was fond—especially of peaches, and of a small kind of nectarine grown in Béarn, and called *melocotins*. On a side table in the royal cabinet there always stood a basket of fruit; of which the king ate at all hours. The constable

[1] The historian Mathieu says, "En riant avec sa maitresse et Bellegarde de vers satiriques il lui prit un grand douleur, et fut sept heures en grand danger; voulant toujours boire et jetant l'eau et le verre à la tête," t. 2, p. 277. Mathieu mistakes; the duchess de Beaufort was at St. Germain, as the royal correspondence proves. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. fol. 1644, MS.

often sent his master fine pears and plums from Chantilly—a gift always acknowledged. As soon as the king was able to resume his usual occupations, he proceeded for three days to Fontainebleau for change of air. His two youngest children had been sent thither from Monceaux during the king's illness. Henry writes to madame la Duchesse an account of their health. "I alighted at my little lodge, where my children were brought to greet me. My daughter improves, and is growing pretty; our son will be handsomer than his elder brother. You conjured me to take with me as much love for you as I leave in your bosom for myself. Ah, what delight your words give me! I feared that my love was intense enough to have absorbed all that you might feel, and my own also! I am now going to yield myself a prisoner to the god Morpheus—if he presents me with other visions than yourself I shall for ever abjure his company! *Bonsoir* now for myself; but it will be *bonjour* for you, *ma chère maitresse*, when you receive this."[1] Madame la Duchesse was also at this period greatly depressed. Throughout the years of her *liaison* with Henry, and at the period when the royal fiat severed the engagement between herself and Bellegarde, the oath of the king one day to legalize their union had reconciled Gabrielle d'Estrées to the position which she alone had dared openly to pronounce "degrading." Contentions had arisen relative to the form to be observed at the baptism of her youngest son, born during the spring of the year at Nantes. Gabrielle insisted that the rite should be performed with the honours befitting *un fils de France*. Henry was willing to gratify the ambition of his

[1] Lettres Missives, vol. 5.

mistress; but determined opposition was made by Rosny, Villeroy, and by the veteran Bellièvre, who besought the king to reflect before he invited Europe through her ambassadors to participate in so scandalous a spectacle. This discord delayed the ceremony; but the duchess had extorted a promise from the king to act in the matter as became the honour and dignity of the woman he intended to make his wife! Perhaps one cause of Gabrielle's depression was the doubt whether the king's fidelity would stand proof against the formidable opposition organized to defeat her pretensions. She knew that the stability of the realm and the fusion of parties depended on a direct succession: that queen Elizabeth, the grand duke of Tuscany, the duke of Lorraine, Madame, Montpensier, and Rosny, intimate friends and sincere allies of his majesty, all had stated their conviction that the birth of a dauphin would be the crowning act of mercy by which God Almighty would bless the king's career of unparalleled prosperity. The crown of the *fleur de lis* —rendered still more brilliant by his own glorious exploits—now circled the brow of Henri Quatre:— would his majesty therefore venture to sully its lustre by branding the escutcheon of his heir with the bar of illegitimacy; or give the diadem of Ste. Clotilde to his mistress? "The duchess was so gracious and courteous to all," writes mademoiselle Guise,[1] "that it was impossible for her greatest enemy to hate her. She ruled the court with gentleness, and she obliged every person she could. She demeaned herself with such dignified gravity and reserve, that to behold her, one would vow

[1] Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644, MS.

that madame la Duchesse had never stirred from the society of vestal virgins. Her dress and her manners were perfect in modesty and taste, so that the king could find no room for suspicion."

M. de Sillery, meanwhile, whose ambassage excited so much speculation, left Paris on his mission about the end of October. His instructions were to negotiate for the immediate dissolution of Henry's marriage with Marguerite de Valois—to forward which copies of every document connected with his majesty's espousals with that princess were given to Sillery; all of which were delivered to the ambassador during the king's sojourn at Fontainebleau, excepting the most important despatch of all—the queen's assent to and demand for the divorce. M. L'Anglois was sent by Rosny to Usson to confer with the queen, and to obtain this memorial, which was to be forwarded by express to Rome. The divorce being assented to by his holiness, Sillery was next commissioned to ask for a dispensation granting license to his majesty to espouse sa cousine la duchesse de Beaufort; and to legitimatize, though not to render capable of succession to the crown, César-Monsieur and his infant brother. Lastly, M. de Sillery was to negotiate the question of the cession of the marquisate of Saluzzo by the duke de Savoye; the pope, by his envoy the cardinal de Medici, having offered himself as mediator at the conferences preceding the peace of Vervins.

Queen Marguerite, when apprized that Henry in reality contemplated placing her crown on the head of his mistress, expressed to Rosny in no measured language her disgust and disapproval. Marguerite seems to have been secretly supported in her

opposition by the sympathy of most of the chief nobles, who entered into correspondence with her majesty on the question. By these personages there is no doubt the queen was counselled to withhold her assent to a divorce, unless the pretensions of Gabrielle d'Estrées were at once and authoritatively set aside. From Rome the queen received the same counsels and promised support. The words of the cardinal de Medici were deeply pondered over by Henry's nobles; whose wives and daughters were amongst the most bitter of Gabrielle's opponents. L'Anglois, therefore, instead of bringing the much desired petition to the pope from Usson, carried a letter from the queen to M. de Rosny, in which Marguerite absolutely refused to stir in the matter of her divorce, unless the king gave his word of honour that Gabrielle d'Estrées should be excluded from the list of future candidates for the honour of his majesty's alliance. The queen wrote, "that although she continued in the will to meet his majesty's desires relative to a divorce, her indignation was so greatly kindled at the fact of which she was now assured, that the king intended to give her place to madame la Duchesse—a lady lost in repute by her connection with his majesty, —that she, who before had exacted neither condition nor pledge from the king, now required a solemn promise and engagement excluding the said lady from legitimate alliance with the king, before she could consent to her own divorce, or forward any petition whatever to the Holy See."[1] Marguerite added, that no amount of compulsion or persecution could make her change her resolution: inasmuch as the pleas set forth in the act of divorce would not

[1] Sully—Economies Royales, p. 404, vol. 1, in fol.

be fulfilled by the elevation of madame la Duchesse: to whit—a queen of spotless renown on the throne of the *fleurs de lis;* and the birth of a dauphin, whose rights being intact, no future hostile combination could assail. This letter was communicated by Rosny to the king. The former asserts that its contents made great impression on his majesty; and led him to reflect seriously on the innumerable obstacles likely to attend the realization of his project. Other historical documents show, on the contrary, that the king manifested great anger; and intimated that other methods should be adopted to procure the divorce; and that the sanction of queen Marguerite might and should be dispensed with. This attitude is certainly more in accordance with Henry's subsequent proceedings, than the indecisive and half relenting condition of mind indicated by Rosny, who is always prone to assign a kind of mental prescience to his hero. It is certain that no subsequent modifications were made in the instructions of M. de Sillery: indeed, when the non-consent of Marguerite de Valois was alleged, Henry threatened to sue for divorce by reason of the past adulteries of the queen; and the unchastity of the life she was actually leading at Usson. Evidence was forthwith collected by command of the king relative to the birth of her two illegitimate children, in case the obduracy of queen Marguerite rendered such a course indispensable. Amongst other writings of this period reflecting on the moral turpitude of the queen appeared the famous *Discours Satyrique;* in which Marguerite's deviations were recounted with revolting coarseness and indecency. These threatening proceedings, it should be borne in

mind, were not instituted to coerce the queen into consenting to a divorce—a measure in which Marguerite was ready enough on her own account to join—but to compel the queen to withdraw the condition which she had imposed to her assent—the royal promise not to bestow the diadem she was about to relinquish on Gabrielle d'Estrées. The queen's letter was shown by Rosny to the chancellor de Cheverny, that through madame de Sourdis it might be communicated to madame la Duchesse. Gabrielle, however, and her *clique*—which comprehended Cheverny, the secretary Forget sieur du Fresne, the bishop of Evreux, Sillery, ostensibly the princes of Lorraine, madame de Sourdis, the marshal de Balagny, and the constable de Montmorency—derided this notification; and urged the king to make still more overt manifestations of his will. The royal physicians were even enlisted in the cause of the favourite; and la Rivière ventured, it was said, to make known to his royal master his fears, arising from certain observations made during the king's recent malady, that no future marriage of his majesty would bestow on the nation a dauphin. The friends of Gabrielle were indiscreet enough to render this declaration public; the result was, that when the fourth pregnancy of the duchess was announced during the ensuing month of December, scandalous allusions became current relative to her asserted intimacy with M. de Bellegarde, whose hastily contracted marriage had been followed by a separation from his bride. The king, nevertheless, loyally stood by his mistress. The condition of Gabrielle seems to have banished any lingering indecision in Henry's projects. Orders were transmitted to Rome to pursue the royal divorce with ardour: and Henry ful-

filled the triumphant aspiration of the duchess by commanding the baptism of her young son, with the pomp and parade of *un enfant de France.* This final concession appears to have been received, by all but by Rosny, as indicative of a resolve on the part of his majesty to espouse the duchesse despite of the protests and discontent of his people. In the exultation of anticipated triumph, madame de Beaufort disregarded the peril of her position—her life interposed between the people and the realization of their legitimate desire to behold the peace of the realm placed on the firmest basis; a court at the Louvre, such as had once promoted the commercial interests of the capital; and the recognition of a legitimate successor to the throne of St. Louis. The adherents of Gabrielle d'Estrées, and even the king himself, evinced a cruel disregard of consequences, in encouraging pretensions which placed the unfortunate duchess in a position so perilous. Henry lingered at Monceaux during the month of October and part of November. During this interval, which the king gave to the recruiting of his health, Henry mediated in a fierce quarrel which ensued between M. de Rosny and the duke d'Epernon, on a question of finance. In his zealous investigations to amass treasure, Rosny found defalcations in the returns from the district of Limoges, and on enquiry received response—that the sum in question had been diverted by command of M. d'Epernon. Rosny lodged a complaint against the duke, and entered such on the public register, without previously notifying his intent or inquiry. An angry altercation ensued, in which Rosny's susceptibilities were wounded by the allusions of the haughty Epernon to the lack of illustrious personages in the pedigree of

Béthune—a subject, which exasperated Rosny more than any attack merely personal. The chancellor interposed to reconcile the combatants; while his majesty wrote from Monceaux, on being informed of the *fracas*, refusing to hear the statements of M. d'Epernon, and commanding Rosny to suffer the affair to subside.

A mandate was also issued by Henry while at Monceaux, directing that the valuable manuscripts and books which had appertained to the late queen-mother should be united to his library; and the whole committed to the care of M. de Thou, whom his majesty appointed royal librarian in the room of Amyot bishop of Auxerre, deceased. The celebrated Byzantine manuscripts, collected by cardinal Ridolfi, had fallen into the possession of queen Catherine on the death of her cousin-german, marshal Strozzi. As their value was great, they were seized on the demise of the queen by her creditors; and had since remained in deposit, waiting the final commands of the king, in the house of Pietro Benciveni, nephew of the late queen's librarian, M. de Bellebranche. The books left in the Louvre by Henry III., and the libraries appertaining to the king's Béarnnois castles, had been temporarily deposited in the college de Clermont. De Thou, however, caused these books, queen Catherine's manuscripts, also the valuable collection formed by Francis I. at Fontainebleau, to be transported to the Louvre; where he arranged and classified the rare Oriental and Italian manuscripts, and French records, and which eventually formed the nucleus of that wonderful collection of printed books and manuscripts—the Bibliothèque Royale.[1]

The approaching debates in the parliament, rela-

[1] Now termed "Bibliothéque Impériale."

tive to the registration of the edict of Nantes; and the pageant of the baptism of the son of the king, at length compelled Gabrielle and Henry to quit their favourite retreat at Monceaux. The ceremony of the baptism of the infant prince was performed at St. Germain on Sunday December 13th. The godfather was the count de Soissons, who, beholding Madame affianced and on the eve of marriage, deemed it politic to propitiate the king. The godmother was Diane de France, duchess d'Angoulême, and dowager of Montmorency. The child received the name of Alexandre; and was destined by the king for the honours of the purple The ceremonial was arranged in strict accordance with that observed on the occasion of royal baptisms. A bed, magnificently hung with white satin, ten feet square, and covered with a counterpane of cloth of gold bordered with ermine, was erected, whereon to deposit the infant, whilst the chamberlains marshalled the procession. The royal guards lined the staircase and corridor of the château; and the archers of the Scotch guard kept the way from the portal of the castle to the church. First marched kettledrums and trumpets, heralds, gentlemen of the chamber bearing lighted torches, and the military officers stationed at St. Germain. The knights of St. Esprit followed, preceding the noblemen bearing the various vessels used during the ceremony. For this illegitimate son of the king, Brissac carried the ewer; the duke de Retz the basin; the duke de Joyeuse the towel, fringed with gold; the duke d'Epernon the torch of virgin wax; and the duke de Montpensier the salt. The child was carried by monsieur de Lavardin; the train of his baptismal mantle of cloth of silver being borne

by the marshal d'Ornano. Within the church magnificent hangings from the *garde meuble* were displayed. The font was of gold from the treasury of Fontainbleau. Behind the font, on a platform draped with velvet beset with *fleurs de lis*, stood the officiating prelate Gondy cardinal bishop of Paris, attended by a train of mitred priests.[1] The king and madame la Duchesse surveyed the scene from a glazed pew on the right of the altar. His majesty led the duchess publicly to her tribune. Gabrielle wore a mantle studded with *fleurs de lis*, to the great scandal of Madame and of the noble ladies present. A banquet followed, at which the duchess, being fatigued, did not appear. Henry sat between Madame and the princess de Condé. The other ladies present were the duchesses d'Angoulême, de Guise, de Rohan, mademoiselles de Guise and de Rohan, madame de Sourdis, madame du Fresne, and madame de Villars the sister of the duchess. At the ball and ballet madame Gabrielle again showed herself in full panoply of beauty. The nobles present, however, beheld with irritation the homage paid by their king to his mistress; with whom he almost exclusively conversed.[2] If any circumstance could have reconciled Madame to her lot as the affianced of the duke de Bar, it must have been the *gêne* and annoyance of her position at court. When Madame refused to grace the receptions of the king by her

[1] Godefroy—Grand Cerem. de France, t. 2. Mémoire de feu M de Rhodes, grand maitre des ceremonies de France, pour le Baptême d'Alexandre Monsieur, fils bâtard du roy et de madame la duchesse de Beaufort, fait à St. Germain en Laye, l'an 1598.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., 1644—Continuation MS. des Mémoires de L'Estoile.

presence, she was accused of sullenness and sectarian bigotry: if she appeared, her dignity and her principles were outraged by the presence of madame la Duchesse; and by the extraordinary precedency granted to her. The most illustrious ladies of the court assembled to grace the evening festivities. The duke de Nevers and his young affianced Marie de Lorraine, eldest daughter of the duke de Mayenne, appeared; also, the duke d'Aguillon heir of Mayenne, and his betrothed, the sister of Nevers. Rosny and his lively consort, whom he was accused of ruling with the hard sway he wielded over the clerks of his majesty's treasury, made salutation to the favourite; mademoiselle de Guise, sparkling and flippant, took diversion in flirting with the dukes de Bellegarde and de Bouillon, being well matched with the latter in point and facility of repartee. The duchess of Mayenne was also present. Though now happily relieved from the cruel anxieties which beset her during the siege of Paris, and the subsequent interval of warfare and negotiation, the duchess still lamented the evil lines within which her lot had fallen. Madame de Mayenne was now jealous of the duke her husband, who, relieved from the arduous office of Chief of the Union, sought diversion, after the fashion of his brother Guise, amongst the fair ladies of Paris. This propensity *de conter fleurette* disgusted the duchess and induced her to keep vigilant watch over the hours spent abroad by her consort. To disarm this inconvenient curiosity, M. de Mayenne at night often dressed his secretary in his robe de chambre, and placed him before the writing-table in the *cabinet de bureau*, at which he usually worked. If madame de Mayenne entered to take cognizance of the proceedings

of monseigneur, the secretary gravely waved his hand, as was the custom of the duke when occupied; a signal which was always understood to command the respectful retirement of the intruder.[1] In such manner did Mayenne evade the *espionnage* of his fretful consort; who at this time was, nevertheless, monopolized by the advantageous alliances of her children with the house of Nevers. A grand ballet was performed in honour of the little prince Alexandre, termed *le ballet des cinq nations*—the chief performers in which were the dukes de Rohan and Nemours, and Bellegarde, the count d'Auvergne, and the marquis de Cœuvres brother of Gabrielle d'Estrées. The evening terminated by an exhibition of dancing on the tight rope by a young Italian—who also vaulted, and performed various feats of legerdemain and conjuring to the great entertainment of the illustrious spectators, and especially it is recorded of his majesty.[2] This splendid festival enjoyed and passed, its penalties had to be endured, as the king soon experienced. Madame de Beaufort, indeed, was elate and content: but Madame was silent and sad; and Rosny, who contemplated a serious bill of costs, preserved cynical gravity. By the demeanour of his great nobles Henry perceived that he had tested their forbearance to its fullest limit: his majesty even owned to Rosny that his orders had been exceeded; for that he had never contemplated so pompous a display. When the bill on the treasury was brought to Rosny for his *visa*, the latter, on taking up the document containing the various items connected with the solemnity, perceived that they were entered

[1] Tallement des Reaux—Historiette vii.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., 1644.

for the baptismal ceremony of *Monsieur fils de France*. The indignation of Rosny was not to be repressed. He refused to sign the paper, which he retained in order that the document might be recopied, and the royal appellation omitted. These erasures diminishing by one-half the fees of the officials employed, a great clamour arose—and the chamber of Rosny was besieged by angry disputants. Rosny listened in silence, and then replied: "Go! messieurs—this is folly: you know that there are no children of France!" Thinking it prudent to inform the king of the pending agitation, Rosny entered the presence with the offending document in his hand. Henry was walking in the gallery of the castle with Epernon and others. "Sire!" said Rosny boldly, "if you suffer this document to pass, you had better at once declare yourself the husband of the duchesse de Beaufort." "This is a piece of the malice of M. du Fresne!"[1] said the king, after glancing over the paper; "it shall not succeed! Messieurs, admire the wickedness of the world! Here, there has been brought this paper to M. de Rosny, which, if he had signed, he would have offended me grievously—and by which, if he refrains from signing, it is hoped to embroil him with *ma maitresse!*" The king, then taking Rosny aside, expressed himself angrily on the meddling officiousness of certain friends of madame la Duchesse, but advised him to wait upon Gabrielle and explain. "You will be certain to find my mistress in a violent passion; but heed her not—if you cannot pacify her, I will authoritatively interfere!" said Henry, doubtfully. Rosny upon this repaired to the apartments of the duchess, whom he

[1] Forget, Sieur du Fresne, under-secretary of state, an adherent and relative of la Duchesse.

found, as the king predicted, incensed at his interference—M. du Fresne, under-secretary of state, having just had audience. She received Rosny with a burst of passionate reproach, accusing him of wilfully misleading the king; and of making his majesty believe that black was white! "Ho! ho! madame," retorted Rosny, nettled at such a reception, "as you assume such demeanour, I have the honour to kiss your hands. I shall, nevertheless, fulfil my duty!" The anger of the duchess was not to be disregarded, however; for Rosny, on more than one occasion, had had cause to rue the result of her private interviews with the king. He therefore returned to the presence, and related the words of madame de Beaufort; and his own prompt retreat before her anger. The temper of the king was warm; but the prospect of a feud between Rosny and Gabrielle, in addition to the vexatious cabals raging around, overpowered the equanimity of his majesty. Henry could not afford to suffer the influence and *prestige* of his faithful Rosny to be diminished amid counsellors whose aim, with few exceptions, was private interest; and who would rejoice to promote discord between the latter and madame la Duchesse. "Allons!" exclaimed Henry, after listening to Rosny's account. "Come with me; you shall see that a woman shall never control me. I will not disgrace or neglect, for her, one who like yourself, Rosny, lives only to promote my glory and interest!" The king seemed much excited; and spoke bitterly of the imprudence of madame la Duchesse and her friends, in attempting to give *le petit Alexandre* the title of *fils de France*. Henry, however, forgot that in sanctioning the ceremonial proper only for a son of France, he had himself

tacitly conceded the rank; and that it almost necessarily followed that Gabrielle and her relatives should seek the after-recognition of such concession; to say nothing of the fees clamorously demanded by the heralds and other state officials, who, having officiated at a royal baptism, expected to be rewarded by its emoluments. Madame de Beaufort received his majesty at the threshold of her saloon, doubting not that Rosny's report would soon bring a visit. Henry refrained from bestowing his accustomed greeting on his mistress, but gravely led her to an adjacent chamber, followed by Rosny, and closed the door. "His majesty, then taking the hand of his mistress, and grasping mine, said—addressing madame la Duchesse—that the true reason which had induced him to devote himself to her was the sweetness and amiability of her disposition; but that now, to his great regret, he perceived that he had been deceived. He then reproached madame la Duchesse for the evil counsels she adopted, and said that, judging of actions from their effects, I alone was the person truly attached to his person and renown. He then ordered the duchess to surmount her anger against me, and to follow my advice, as it was not his intention to dismiss me to please herself." The duchess, surprised at this language, began to weep. She withdrew her hand, and hazarded an angry tirade against Rosny. She said that, after giving herself and her affection to the king, she now beheld herself sacrificed to please his valet; and that she begged his majesty to remember the evil offices which M. de Rosny perpetually rendered to their children. The duchess, apparently overwhelmed by the retrospect, then fell on a couch weeping, and declared that she could not survive the bitter affronts offered to her.

"I watched Henry narrowly," relates Rosny. "I perceived that his heart quailed; and that he keenly felt the grief of his mistress." Doubtless, had not Rosny been present, the duchess must have triumphed; and the roll of the baptism of Alexandre Monsieur would have been filed amongst the exchequer warrants of France. "Madame," retorted Henry, "you need not resort to so many artifices: the facts are simple—your demands are inexpedient!" "Sire," exclaimed madame de Beaufort, "I see that it is your intention to abandon me. Remember that it was against my desire to occupy this position, into which you have forced me. Why have you brought M. de Rosny to hear these the hardest and most cruel things that man can say to woman?" The grief of his mistress, the cynical eye of Rosny, and the promise that he had made to the latter, "that he should see that no woman ruled him," increased the anger and embarrassment of Henry. The duchess in her passion forgot that her victory lay in silence, until the departure of Rosny relieved the king from a censor and witness of his subserviency to her charms. "Pardieu, madame," angrily responded Henry, "I see that you talk this nonsense on purpose to make me dismiss Rosny, whom I cannot spare. Madame, if I were reduced to the deplorable necessity, I could better dispense with ten mistresses like yourself, than with one servant like Rosny!" So saying, Henry turned to leave the apartment. The duchess, who had never before heard herself so addressed, arrested his majesty with a cry; and, rising, she fell at his feet. Rosny was far too astute to abandon the king at this critical moment, knowing that all would surely then be lost; and that the mandate acknowledging the little Alexandre as a prince of the

blood was certain to be conceded. Henry raised the duchess, and consoled her—"being himself almost as much moved as his beautiful mistress." After some further conference the duchess, according to Rosny, consented to the postponement of her son's claim; and promised to forgive the presumptuous minister who had abetted, and in fact suggested the royal veto.[1] Had Rosny, however, been one of the most enthusiastic promoters of the marriage of madame Gabrielle, he could not have tendered more sage advice than to counsel the duchess to suspend the recognition of her son's royal title. Paris was again in the throes of another religious agitation, excited by the presentation of the edict of Nantes to the parliament of Paris. The king, out of compliment to the legate de Medici, commanded that the debates should be postponed until he had quitted the realm. The greatest amount of ultramontane zeal was displayed by the *curés* of Paris; who again commenced their peculiar style of oratory from the pulpits of the capital. It was proposed, as public processions had been interdicted, except on the written license of the privy council given through the cardinal-bishop, to parade the Host under a canopy through the streets, as practised in Spain; a custom never observed in Paris. Many of the *curés* eagerly gave assent to the proposal, which Rosny characterized as a "ceremony of sedition, rather than a ceremony of religion;" and it was further agreed to ring the bells of each parish as the procession entered its precincts, when the inhabitants of every street were to be exhorted to present themselves at the doors of their houses to salute the Host. Incredible scandal and violence ensued, until the parliament interfered, and petitioned the king to

[1] Mém. du duc de Sully, liv. 10ème.

prohibit a practice contrary to the traditions and customs of the Gallican Church. A report was spread that the Huguenots were to have churches in Paris; while two colleges in the university were to be set apart for the education of their youth. The orthodoxy of the king was severely questioned by these insolent ecclesiastics; one of whom ventured to observe in the pulpit, when alluding to the faith anciently professed by his majesty, "*que la caque sentoit toujours le hareng.*" The rumour also was diligently spread in the provinces, that the Parisians were ready to organize a second St. Barthélemy, to sweep away the pollutions of Madame Catherine and her Huguenots. Boucher, curé of St. Benoit, who had been pardoned by the clemency of Henry for his share in the past excesses of the Parisians, preached a series of sermons against the edict; and said that the accursed Huguenots ought to be dragged to the slaughter-houses of the capital; and that the edict should have no effect in his parish.[1] The clauses of the edict which excited most clamour were those which admitted Huguenots to equal civil rights with their countrymen, and opened to them public offices: the stipulation permitting them to retain the strongholds in their possession for the space of eight years, likewise, occasioned much dissatisfaction. The edict was nevertheless in many respects a counterpart of that granted with so much caution by Henry III., in 1578, at Poitiers. There was this difference, however — that whereas the decree of Henry III. was issued to allay animosities, but designedly intended to remain a dead letter as far as concerned privilege and legislation, the more ampli-

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644. Continuation MS. des Mém. de L'Estoile, autrement Journal de Henri Quatre.

fied edict of Henri Quatre, granted in good faith and sympathy, was a *bonâ fide* law, to be applied, realized, and if its working fell short of the royal intent, to be again amended and enlarged. Henry availed himself of his victories and popularity to carry this edict through the Chambers. No monarch ever more sturdily rejected ultramontane influence. In the mind of Henry the difference between papal authority in affairs temporal and matters spiritual was clearly defined. The king never ceased through his ambassadors in Rome to profess himself the humble disciple of the pope in religious concerns; but the independence of his judgment in secular affairs was emphatically signified. Not the least moved from his purpose by the factious protests of his subjects of Paris, Henry returned to his capital after the festival of Christmas. Every influence was then used to win over the chief courtiers, to join in the protests and remonstrances about to be offered to the king by the Chambers. The president Seguier waited on madame la Duchesse to request her interposition to induce the king to modify at least the clause of the edict which admitted Protestants to the highest offices in the state. Gabrielle replied, "that her interposition would be of no avail; that she knew the resolve of his majesty, which nothing could induce him to relinquish; neither did she herself understand what objection could be made to the admission of Huguenots to the Chambers, as they were loyal, true-hearted subjects. The king, at the request of MM. de la Cour, had been clement enough to permit members of the late League to sit in his Chambers—men who had borne arms against him: she therefore declined the office obligingly proposed

to her by M. le President."[1] This answer greatly pleased the Huguenots; so much so, that the duke de Bouillon visited the duchess to thank her in the name of the Protestant communities of the realm; and to pray her to confirm the king in such politic and virtuous resolves. Gabrielle possessed always a certain popularity with the Huguenots of France. She never used her influence against them; and, by the power of her charms, the king, it was believed, had been restrained from offering to heal all feuds by espousing the infanta Doña Isabel. The priests continued to agitate throughout the period of Henry's sojourn in Paris. Some arrests were consequently made; as in the parish of St. Severin, the *curé* refused absolution to his penitents, until they had taken oath to oppose the registration of the obnoxious edict by every means possible. One Beraud, a captain of the city wards, was actually so transported with fervour, that, by the counsel of several of the *curés*, he waited upon the duke de Mayenne, and asked if his highness was willing to resume his old *rôle* of the Chief of the Union, as a strong section of the capital waited only his orders to enrol? The duke prudently consigned his petitioner to the custody of the archers of his majesty's guard; who conveyed him at once to the dungeons of the Châtelet.[2] A council extraordinary was summoned by the king, to intimate his final resolve on the edict. His majesty remarked that it was his will the edict should be registered; that the Chambers need not take exception at the presence of loyal Huguenots, when rebellious leaguers had been admitted to share in the deliberations, whom he had promoted to

[1] Bibl. Imp. MS. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644.

[2] Ibid.

posts of honour and confidence, to which M. de Mayenne, then present, might certify. That he was weary of war; and had borne arms with the Huguenots during the space of eighteen years, who were people not to be so easily beaten in the field as the orthodox lords supposed; in testimony of which he appealed to M. de Soissons. Three pitched battles would not break their strength; nor was he ashamed or reluctant to confess that, when surrounded by his brave Huguenots, he had always felt certain of victory: "therefore, Messeigneurs, it is my unalterable will that this my edict shall be accepted, registered, and punctually executed."[1] No one replied; and the council separated. Henry took precautions to ensure the peace of the capital before his departure from the Louvre. Rosny remained in Paris; also Montmorency, and Bouillon, that fierce champion of the Huguenots. Throughout the following two months the utmost agitation prevailed: the Sorbonne and the university joined in the clamour and petitioned the king. Henry was advised by his council to go down to the Palais, command the registration of the edict, and suppress further debate on the matter; but the king declined to use his prerogative except in extremity—preferring, as his majesty said, "open abuse to private slander."

The entry of the duke de Bar, accompanied by his brother, M. de Vaudemont, and the cardinal de Lorraine, with a suite of 300 gentlemen, allayed for a few days the vehement dissensions prevalent. The people cheered the prince whose errand was to carry back into Lorraine, Madame with her *prêche*, and her chaplains. No dispensation for the celebration of the marriage had arrived; the pope

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644.

obdurately refused to sanction the alliance, unless previously authorized by the abjuration of Madame.[1] D'Ossat passed mornings in the papal ante-chamber; or in that of Aldobrandini cardinal minister, who did all he could to promote the wishes of his Christian majesty. Clement, despite every solicitation, remained firmly resolved, by the advice of the cardinals de Medici and Bellarmine, not to issue dispensation; his holiness believing that at the last the fortitude of Madame would yield. The duke de Bar and his father, on the contrary, entered with alacrity into the views of king Henry; the duke alleged that the end and the motive consecrated the design, and that when once married, Madame must conform. The princess meanwhile permitted her future decisions to be canvassed; but very sturdily acted upon present conviction. The homage of M. de Bar appears nevertheless to have mollified the sentiments of Madame, whose sedate and masculine intellect was gratified by the deference of her future spouse—besides, the princess longed to quit the court. The duke, however, prayed his affianced bride to confer, before her marriage, with doctors, both orthodox and reformed; while the king prescribed this concession. Madame made no objection: and a conference ensued between the doctor Duval and her chaplain Telénus,

[1] Clement VIII. addressed a Brief to the duke de Bar, dated Ferrara, 8th Oct., 1598, in which his holiness says: "Etes-vous si aveuglé que vous allez de gaieté de cœur vous perdre, vous et les votres! Où est votre vertu; où est votre prudence? Où est la crainte de Dieu? Avisez-vous bien une et deux fois à ce que vous allez faire; on ne se moque point de Dieu! Ne vous attendez point que nous dispensions jamais de notre autorité apostolique un tel mariage; car nous ne le ferons jamais: nous soufrirons plutôt que notre corps soit dechiré et ecartelé membre par membre, etc."

and others, in the presence of the most illustrious personages of the court. Madame stipulated that she should not be expected to ask any questions; or to listen to the disputants while sitting in state. Accordingly the conference was holden in the saloon adjoining the bedchamber of Madame, into which she retired, and, as it was afterwards alleged, fell asleep on her bed. The doctor Duval acquitted himself more learnedly than advisedly; and filled his discourse with argument so erudite as to afford ample scope for ridicule.[1] Telénus replied; and mockingly confessed that to comprehend the arguments of the learned Sorbonnist it was indeed requisite to have been trained from birth upwards in so subtle a school of divinity; and consequently, he feared that Madame had no chance of conversion. Madame, after the conference, was asked by the king whether her intellect or her conscience had been touched by the address she had just heard? She replied in the negative. The duke, her affianced, then exhorted her to follow the illustrious example of his majesty. "In every circumstance, monsieur, the example of my brother is an invariable guide, excepting in matters concerning the law of God!" replied Madame.[2] Henry, it is recorded, on hearing this response turned towards his future brother-in-law, saying, "You hear, monseigneur! I have done all in my power to change sentiments which I deplore: it will be for you hereafter to compel their recognition!"[3] The marriage con-

[1] Journal de Henri IV.—Sully, liv. 10ème. Sully says that he only entered the saloon of conference "lorsque les deux tenans commencaient à succomber à la fatigue."

[2] D'Aubigné—Hist. Universelle, t. 3, ch. 13.

[3] Péréfixe—Hist. de Henri le Grand.

tract was, nevertheless, signed with all accustomed formalities. The king gave his sister a further portion of 300,000 gold crowns, the dowry of a daughter of France: 40,000 crowns were, moreover, presented by Henry to Madame, to defray the cost of the royal mantle to be worn at the nuptial ceremony.[1] The wealth which Madame brought consoled the duke de Lorraine for the heresy of his future daughter-in-law; as his pecuniary affairs were embarrassed from his participation in the wars of the League. The princess next demanded that her marriage should be celebrated by Protestant ministers. This proposal threw the duke de Bar into extreme consternation: being both weak and excitable, he wept when required to sanction such an enormity. Thereupon high words ensued between the king and his sister[2]—more vigorous than was consistent with their exalted dignity. M. de Rosny was then requested to mediate; but, having a wholesome remembrance of Madame's vituperative powers, he declined to interfere. The king then decided that the ceremony should be performed according to the Romish ritual. His majesty therefore summoned the cardinal Gondy, and requested him to solemnize the marriage rites. Gondy positively declined; and remarked, "that the veto of Rome prevented any of the orthodox clergy from performing such ceremony: neither could they fail so greatly in respect and Christian duty to the sister

[1] Lettres Missives, t. 5. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, 407, fol. 27.

[2] Henry was especially exasperated at the female cohort around Madame. He suspected these ladies of prompting the resolution evinced by his sister; and counselled the duke de Bar to dismiss them all on their arrival in Nancy—advice which M. de Bar had not spirit to follow.

of their sovereign as to pretend to solemnize a marriage which would be no bond at all; as the children, issue of such alliance, could be proclaimed bastards whenever it pleased M. de Bar so to decree." This consideration had no weight with the king, who relied on the future conversion of Madame to ward from her offspring such disastrous consequences; and on his power eventually to procure the dispensation, and enforce its concession, if needed. Application was, therefore, made to several other prelates; but the same refusal was elicited. Madame's Huguenot ministers triumphed: and the duke de Bar fell from his previous elation into the depths of despair. Henry, however, was ever fertile in expedients to achieve his policy, or his will. The archbishop of Rouen was the king's illegitimate brother[1] —a prelate, however, of morals so licentious, that his promotion to the see of Rouen had been regarded as an act almost sacrilegious. The archbishop was the boon companion of the marshal de Roquelaure,[2] whose *liaison* with the abbess of Maubuisson, Angelique d'Estrées, had recommended him to the notice of madame la Duchesse. Roquelaure, moreover, was one of Henry's chamberlains, before the accession of his majesty to the throne of France; and had been, in that capacity, intrusted by the king with the management of many private matters.

[1] Son of Antoine king of Navarre, by mademoiselle de Rouet.

[2] "Roquelaure faisoit avec l'archeveque tous les soirs, des soupers plus que galant." In 1604 a great change occurred in the life of the archbishop, whose conscience was aroused by a horrible incident. He gave up his archiepiscopal office, and retired to his abbey of Marmoutiers, where he spent the last years of his life in rigorous penance and devotion. He died in 1610.

On the demise of the young cardinal de Bourbon, in 1594, Roquelaure reminded the king of the claims of his illegitimate brother, who was then Bishop of Lectoure. Henry hesitated; but at length was persuaded to sanction the nomination. From a prelate of such lax discipline, bound, moreover, to his will by the ties of parentage and gratitude, Henry thought to meet with no obstacle in realizing the demands of M. de Bar, who clamoured to be married by an orthodox archbishop. The king accordingly summoned the archbishop, and proposed that he should unite Madame to the duke de Bar. M. de Rouen, however, likewise refused to embroil himself with Rome; and quoted, in support of his determination, the canons of numerous councils, which decreed supreme penalties to ecclesiastics who ventured to administer a sacrament interdicted by the Holy See. Henry listened with surprise and ridicule: "As you seem to have such scruples," ironically responded his majesty, "I will now summon, and send to you, your theologian-major, and ordinary confessor, M. de Roquelaure, who understands marvellously well the care of such consciences as yours!" The king thereupon summoned the marshal. "Roquelaure," said his majesty, "your archbishop pretends to ape the prelate and the theologian, and has been quoting the sacred canons, which he understands no better than you or myself. He has just refused to marry my sister. I beg of you go, and compel him to yield in his resolution." The marshal, thereupon, replied in language too flippant to transcribe, but promised to bring M. l'Archevêque to reason. Roquelaure accordingly visited M. de Rouen, and opened his batteries of ribald objurgation on the weak and depraved prelate. Roque-

laure concluded his remonstrance by the threat that unless the archbishop obeyed the commands of his royal brother and patron he would divulge certain words of iniquitous import often on the lips of the prelate; "which, if revealed, adieu to your crozier and mitre, monseigneur, and to your beautiful mansion of Gaillon, with 10,000 crowns of revenue!"[1] Well might the anger of Madame kindle when she reflected on the devices resorted to in order to accomplish her union with the duke de Bar—and none can wonder at the indignation with which, a year subsequently, she retorted on her brother an offensive epithet, when he used to taunt her with the equivocal position she occupied at the court of Lorraine.

The arguments of Roquelaure having dissipated the reluctance, real or pretended, of the prelate, M. de Rouen received commands to present himself at the *levée* of the king on Sunday the last day of January, 1599. Resolved to terminate the dissension which wearied him, Henry obviated further *tracasserie* relative to the place where the ceremony was to be performed, by deciding that the marriage should be celebrated in his closet. His majesty accordingly sent Roquelaure to notify his intentions to Madame and to her *fiancé* on the preceding evening at their *coucher;* and to request M. de Bar and his witnesses to join him at St. Germain en Laye, to which palace the court had removed a few days previously. The king, after hearing early mass, repaired to the apartments of Madame, whom he found *en deshabille*, tearful, but resigned. Taking the hand of his sister, Henry led her to his closet, within which

[1] Sully, liv. 10ème. Cayet Chron. Septennaire. Journal de Henri IV.

were assembled the archbishop of Rouen, wearing his mitre and rochet, the duke de Bar and his brothers, MM. de Rosny and de Bouillon, Roquelaüre, and M. de Bassompierre, who then acted as political agent in Paris for the duke de Lorraine. The king led Madame to a temporary altar, and commanded M. de Rouen[1] to commence the nuptial service. The archbishop prayed to be excused, pleading the absence of the pontifical dispensation; and suggesting that the chapel of the castle might be a more appropriate place for the solemnization of the ceremony. "Proceed, M. de Rouen. My presence is a sufficient and solemn guarantee—and my closet is a spot sacred as any church," responded the king authoritatively. The archbishop opened his missal, and thereupon performed the ceremony, the king placing the hand of his sister within that of the duke de Bar. The benediction pronounced, Henry conducted the bridegroom with great pomp to the chapel of the château, where high mass was performed. The duchesse de Bar was escorted from the royal closet by the duke de Bouillon, and proceeded to hear *le prêche* in the hall of the château. Madame then retired to array herself in bridal ornaments previous to receiving the congratulations of the court.[2] A banquet ensued, at which the only novelty to be noticed was the first public appearance of the child-bride of the little duke de Vendôme, who dined at a table with mademoiselle de Guise, and is

[1] "Mon frère," said his majesty, "je desire que vous fassiez tout presentement le mariage de ma sœur et de M. de Bar."—Mém. de Cheverny, who was present in his capacity of chancellor. "L'archevêque s'étaut revêstu de ses ornaments pontificaux procéda à la dite benediction."

[2] Cayet Chron. Septennaire.—Mém. de Sully. Godfroy Grand Cerém. de France, t. 2. Benediction nuptiale de madame Sœur du Roy, et de Monseigneur le duc de Bar.

entered in the record of the ceremonial as madame de Vendôme! M. de Mercœur, her father, unable to brook the alteration of affairs at court; and abashed at the ignominious overthrow of his pretensions, had obtained permission from his majesty to make a campaign in Hungary against the Turks, under the banner of the Emperor Rodolph.

For the space of a week after the espousals of Madame high festival was holden. Every day ushered in fresh pastime: the court banqueted, danced, performed ballets, hunted and jousted in magnificent pomp. Two other marriages were also solemnized—between Catherine de Lorraine[1] and the duke de Nevers; and Henriette de Gonzaga with the duke d'Aiguillon, eldest son of M. de Mayenne. The count de Soissons, however, was present at none of the festivities; he having requested permission to retire to his castle of Maillé, "that he might not witness the marriage of Madame; or the registration of the edict of Nantes—both which events he held as grievous misfortunes."[2] Amongst other personages who visited the court of St. Germain at this festive period, the count and countess d'Entragues paid their homage to Madame. Madame d'Entragues was the once famous Marie Touchet,[3] mistress of Charles IX. and mother of the Count d'Auvergne. By her marriage with M. d'Entragues the countess had three daughters, who inherited their mother's beauty. She was accompanied by her eldest daughter Henriette, who then ap-

[1] Daughter of the duke de Mayenne.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644.

[3] Marie Touchet married Francois de Balzac count d'Entragues in 1578, on the demise of his first wife, Jaqueline de Rohan.

peared at court for the first time.[1] Mademoiselle d'Entragues danced a couranto in a ballet with her brother the count d'Auvergne, with such grace as to attract the attention of the king. In stature mademoiselle d'Entragues was of middle size; her features were lovely and radiant with vivacity; her hair was auburn, and, according to the prevailing fashion, lightly sprinkled with powder. She was merry, witty, and even learned;[2] and her manners were enticing and full of *agacerie*. Her whims and humours were studiously indulged by her brother M. d'Auvergne; who found his sister's society so congenial, as to cause some slight jealousy to his consort the daughter of the constable. The dark flashing eyes of mademoiselle d'Entragues revealed a temperament both passionate and exacting; nevertheless, she was unanimously voted by the courtiers "*une femme toute charmante.*" Henry conversed for some time with this bewitching damsel; and honoured her by an invitation to dance. The numerous flirtations of the lady, however, eventually displeasing the king, or more probably madame la Duchesse, the countess and her daughter made short sojourn at the court; and Rosny records that the king ungallantly applied the term "*cette baggage*" when speaking of the ladies of M. d'Entragues' family. Mademoiselle d'En-

[1] She was born at Marcoussi in 1579, and therefore was just twenty.

[2] "L'Histoire literaire de son temps nous apprend que mademoiselle d'Entragues n'avait pas negligé les advantages de l'erudition. Hemeri d'Amboise, qui lui dedia en 1610 la traduction de St. Gregoire de Tours dit qu'elle avoit employé la vivacité de son esprit divin à la lecture des sacrés cahiers, et avait tous les jours entre les mains St. Augustin, et semblables auteurs, en ce qu'ils etoient tournés en quelque langue vulgaire, dont elle avait parfaite connoissance."

tragues, however appeared, created a sensation at court, vanished, and was forgotten, until fresh incidents again brought into notice—

"Ces doux regards qui mettent les cœurs en cendres,
Beaux yeux qui contraindriez les plus fiers de se rendre!"

Perhaps the sudden departure of mademoiselle d'Entragues might have some relation to certain verses of malignant tendency reflecting on Gabrielle d'Estrées, and ridiculing the royal projects concerning the duchess. The king one morning while walking in his orangery found a paper of verses suspended from a branch of his favourite orange tree. His majesty perused them, and exclaimed, "Ventre St. Gris! if I could only discover the author of these, he should swing from an oak, and not from an orange tree!"[1] The composing of the verses, and the placing of the paper so as to attract the royal attention, resembled one of the *saillies vives* of the clever and dauntless Henriette de Balzac. Madame la Duchesse, however, remained uninjured by the wiles of her various detractors. Her empire over the king was not to be shaken; Henry had given her the truest homage of the heart; as well as the only faithful affection he ever professed. A poet of the court presented the king with a short poem, addressed to "*la Royne de mes Pensées*," which Henry publicly offered to the duchess. One of its verses is remarkable, and runs thus:—

"Ton image toujours dans mon cœur sera peinte[2]
Gardant ce temple saint, pour cette idole sainte
D'autres objets désormais je ne puis être atteint.
Ces gages précieux[3] qui nourissent mon âme

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644.

[2] Muse Francaises: Stances pour le Roy à madame la Duchesse.

[3] Henry alludes to César-Monsieur and to his other children.

Sont nuroir de toi-même, ou reluira ma flamme
Quand l'œil qui l'alluma seroit lui même eteint!"

"The king," writes the chancellor de Cheverny, "being resolved to marry madame la Duchesse, began at this period purposely to invest her with supreme influence. He now bestowed more graces and important offices on personages who sought her intervention; and always commanded that the person gratified should wait on madame la Duchesse and thank her for the favour bestowed."

The acrimony of the debates on the registration of the edict of Nantes in la Haute Chambre, afforded piquant relief to the *fêtes* of St. Germain. Amongst the courtiers the edict was provocative of contention. M. de Vitry one day taunted M. de Rosny with the aggressive nature of "Huguenoteric," an observation responded to by Rosny with his usual warmth. M. de Vitry thereupon sent a challenge to Rosny. The king summoned Vitry, and desired him to select a good second, as it was his intention himself to act in that capacity for M. de Rosny;[1] a communication, which of course prohibited the encounter, as seconds, in these days, also fought during the combat of their principals. The king continued to be beset with remonstrances: first from the papal nuncio Gonzaga, then from Berthier chief syndic of the Gallican Church. Worn out by these solicitations, Henry granted audience on the 7th of February, in no very placable mood, to deputies sent by the parliament and the clergy, to make final remonstrance "on the ungodly and ignominious concessions granted." It would be difficult to find a parallel for the discourse which Henry then pronounced: vehement, sarcastic, threatening, the as-

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644, et seq.

tonished senators felt that they had to deal with a monarch conscious of his power, and able to exercise it in rescuing an important body of his subjects from bondage. The rules of royal oratory were ignored by Henry on this occasion; for he addressed or rebuked individuals present, whose actions or known opinions elicited his animadversion. "You see me," said his majesty, "in my cabinet, where I am going to speak with you without the pomp, and *l'epée a la cap* of my predecessors. I wish to inform you that it is my will that you register the edict which I have granted to the Huguenots. I gave it for the sake of peace, which, as I have obtained abroad for my kingdom, it is my intention to establish within my realm. You ought to obey me, considering the obligations which all my subjects owe me; and principally you of my parliament. I have restored many of you to your houses and lands; for others I have confirmed and preserved their faith. The members of my parliament would not occupy their present seats without me. I know that factions have been formed in my parliament; and that turbulent priests have been instigated to preach revolt. That was the way taken before the barricades, and which led by degrees to the assassination of the late king. Be sure that I will repress such doings. I will cut the root of faction, and overthrow all preachers of sedition. I have vaulted over the walls of many towns, and I will show you, messieurs, that I can leap over barricades! Allege not to me your zeal for the Catholic faith! I am more orthodox than you, being the eldest son of the Church. You deceive yourselves if you fancy that you are all-powerful with the pope—a despatch from me would attach you all as heretics, if so it

pleased me. I am well aware, messieurs, of your hostile contrivances. I know all that you say, and all that you do—a demon reveals to me your seditious *menées*. Those who oppose my edict desire war. Should war break out to-morrow with the Huguenots, I would not share in it; but you, messieurs—you should wage combat in your robes, in the fashion of your late celebrated procession of Capuchins, each with a musket beneath his habit! I call as witness to the purity of my intentions, and to testify to the necessity of the edict, M. le Connétable, MM. de Bellièvre, de Sillery, de Sancy, and de Villeroy: moreover, I have granted the said edict by the advice of my princes and peers. I am a king, and I speak to you as your king. My officers of the High Courts are, it is true, my right arm; but if this said right arm is affected with gangrene, of necessity it must be severed by the left. When my regiments mutiny I break them! What will you gain by not verifying my edict peacefully and willingly; for it will be registered, despite the agitation and clamour of your preachers!" [1] The king thus continued throughout a long oration, somewhat disconnected, but worded so that every phrase smote a popular fallacy or prejudice. His majesty stated that he had instructed his attorney-general to proceed against turbulent ecclesiastics, who abused the privilege of the pulpit. Finally, the king recommended the members of the High Court present to imitate the example of M. de Mayenne—and reiterated his resolve to carry his edict by compulsion if necessary. The members of the deputation, perceiv-

[1] Lettres Missives, t. 5; edited by M. Berger de Xivrey—original MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Fontette, portf. 6. Journal de Henri IV.

ing that the king was in earnest, ventured no reply. Towards the end of the month of February, 1599, the edict was registered; and its execution committed to the wisdom of his majesty.[1] Had Henry demonstrated the slightest hesitation, or had his measures been less prompt, an insurrection probably would have ensued. All public officials had been admonished by orders in council to execute their several functions of repression, or accusation without respect of persons. The parish belfries were closed; and street harangues by agitators forbidden. The Sorbonne, and the other colleges of Paris, having once been made to feel the power of the royal arms, and to comprehend that the old reign of intolerance had passed away with the race of Valois, deemed it politic to acquiesce in the liberal opinions of the king; and to accept the confirmation of their privileges and charters, rather than to provoke a struggle, the issue of which would probably result in the suppression of the university of Paris. "I have vaulted over the walls of many towns, and I will show you that I can leap over barricades," was too significant a hint to be disregarded.

After the registration of the edict, Henry nominated a commission, consisting of the count de Schomberg, de Thou, and Calignon, to consider the best mode of executing its clauses. After some debate, it was resolved that one magistrate and two chief gentlemen should be appointed in every province throughout the realm, to interpret the edict, and to give effect to its spirit and tenor. The conference was holden at Conflans, in the house

[1] Registres du Parlement de Paris.—Benoit, Hist. de l'Edit de Nantes.

of M. de Villeroy. After a session of unusual length and labour, M. de Schomberg, the faithful and enlightened friend of Henri Quatre, died suddenly,[1] in his coach, as he was entering Paris with M. de Thou. The demise of Schomberg was generally lamented; the orthodox subjects of his majesty, however, averred that his death was a manifestation of Divine wrath at the unholy compact which that day had been signed and concluded between the true Faith and heresy.

[1] From aneurism—De Thou.

CHAPTER IV.

1599.

Negotiations of M. de Sillery in Rome—The duke de Joyeuse—He returns to his monastery—Le Père Ange—The royal divorce—Details—Gabrielle d'Estrées declares the certainty of her marriage with the king—Accompanies the king to Fontainebleau—Her return to Paris—M. Zamet—Illness of Gabrielle d'Estrées—Its mysterious origin—Demise of the duchesse de Beaufort—Correspondence on the event—Despair of Henri Quatre—Summons M. de Rosny—Suppositions on the origin of the malady of madame de Beaufort—Obsequies of the duchess performed in royal state—Her interment in the abbey church of Maubuisson—Sympathy manifested for the king—The parliament offers condolence—Letter of Madame—The answer made by the king to his sister—Queen Marguerite writes to the king and to M. de Rosny—The king visits Fontainebleau, where he gives audience to the condé de Villamediana and to the Franciscan Calatagirone—Affairs of Saluzzo—Mademoiselle d'Entragues—The king visits le Bois de Malesherbes—Designs of the Balzac family—Character of Henriette de Balzac—Her designs, and the weakness of the king—She demands a promise of marriage—Royal sojourn at Blois—Its object—Designs of the duke de Biron—His league with the duke de Savoy—Death of the chancellor de Cheverny—Return of the king to Paris—Fêtes of the hôtel Zamet—Continuation of the negotiation for the king's divorce—Petition of the

queen—Pope Clement appoints commissioners to investigate the affair—Reports and decision of these commissioners—Correspondence of queen Marguerite—Reluctance of the pope to ratify the decree of divorce—Sillery satisfies the scruples of the pontiff—The decree of divorce receives papal ratification—Letter of queen Marguerite to the king—Conditions granted to the queen—Henriette de Balzac—She extorts a promise of marriage from Henri Quatre—Its tenor—Scene with M. de Rosny—Resolution demonstrated by the king—Mademoiselle d'Entragues is installed as *maitresse à titre.*

M. DE SILLERY, ambassador extraordinary to the Holy See, entered Rome on the 19th day of March, 1599.[1] His mission was one as deeply important to the king personally, as to the realm of France. The four principal points Sillery was sent to negotiate were—the dissolution of the marriage between Henri Quatre and queen Marguerite; the legitimization of the children of the king and madame la Duchesse, with dispensation for his majesty to espouse the latter; the restoration of the marquisate of Saluzzo—an affair which Henry pursued with extraordinary ardour; and the granting by his holiness of the requisite dispensation to render valid the marriage recently contracted between Madame and the duke de Bar. Sillery was directed to negotiate in strict union with the cardinals de Joyeuse and d'Ossat. The bribe offered by the king, to conciliate the conflicting interests and prejudices likely to oppose these projects, was—a promise to suspend the edicts against the Jesuits, and the proceedings instituted to effect a compulsory sale of their lands in France; and a passport, which Sillery was empowered to deliver to the Jesuit Lorenzo Maggio to

[1] 'Ossat engaged the Orsini palace for the French envoy.

enable him to negotiate with his majesty personally for the restoration of the order—a design, the chief supporters of which in the council were Villeroy and M. de la Varenne.

The temper of the papal court, however, boded evil: for the recent proceedings of the king had thrown the pope and the Sacred College into a paroxysm of irritation.[1] Henry by his late acts plainly indicated that he held the maxim—the pope for spiritual affairs, and the king for matters temporal and secular! The marriage of Madame, notwithstanding the prohibition of the Holy See, was galling beyond measure to his holiness—"which alliance has been effected despite the law of nations, and my especial injunctions." The pope alleged, and with reason, that the king could scarcely ask to be released from his engagements to Marguerite de Valois on the plea that that alliance was solemnized without the papal dispensation; when his majesty demonstrated that he held that preliminary to be indifferent, by so celebrating the nuptials of Madame Catherine. The cardinal de Joyeuse, notwithstanding these comments, asked the pope that, at the approaching nomination of cardinals, four of these prelates might be named by king Henry. The pope shortly declined—and remarked, that his majesty had nominated already three personages for the cardinalate, MM. de Sourdis, d'Ossat,[2] and

[1] "La consommation du mariage de Madame sans dispense; et la divulgation de l'Edit touchant les pretendus reformez nous vient fort mal apropos en cette saison de la dispute du marquisat de Saluces," writes d'Ossat.

[2] D'Ossat was permitted to call himself cardinal d'Ossat, instead of cardinal de Rennes after his bishopric; or cardinal de St. Eusèbe, from the patronymic of his cardinalate.

du Perron. His holiness said that the marriage of Madame could not be recognized by the Holy See without a manifest departure, for the sake of expediency, from Christian consistency and the traditions of the papacy. The same evening the envoy of the duke de Lorraine was informed that the pope, in consequence of the unhallowed marriage of the duke de Bar, suspended his intercourse with the duchy; and declined to receive a petition from the cardinal de Lorraine, who desired that Nancy might be declared an episcopal see. As for the affair of the marquisate of Saluzzo, the pope showed himself a lukewarm mediator. The duke of Savoy obstinately maintained his claims; and even offered to cede in lieu the county of Bresse, a district richer and more important than the territory contested. "I desire the friendship of M. de Savoye," wrote king Henry to the cardinal de Joyeuse, "but I intend to have back the territory that appertains to my crown!"[1] The king wrote, moreover to d'Ossat, and positively stated, "that he would accept neither treaty nor alliance with M. de Savoye, unless the marquisate was restored." Henry deemed it a perpetual reproach to his crown that Savoye should possess a territory perfidiously captured during the late reign, without previous declaration of war; and whilst Henry III. was engaged in contest with the rebellious states of 1588. The claims of the king were not positively set aside—but the pope showed the utmost tardiness in discussing the matter; and spoke publicly of the impossibility that king Henry could dream of renewing the war for the sake of so paltry a principality!

[1] Lettre du Roy au cardinal de Joyeuse.—Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5. MS. appartenant à M. l'abbé Caron de Versailles.

The Spanish minister, the duke de Sessa, was now assiduous in his courtesies to the representatives of a monarch whom he designated "as the greatest Captain of the Age, worthy by his exploits to confer the honour of knighthood on his catholic majesty Don Philip III.!" The truth was, that Henry's independence occasioned much anxiety: the king had shown that while desiring on reciprocal terms amity with Rome, yet that he could dispense with the papal benediction. The tempest of Clement's indignation at the recent events in France, and at the publication of the edict of Nantes, had burst forth in an audience granted to the cardinals de Joyeuse and d'Ossat, on the 18th of March, the day previous to the arrival of M. de Sillery in Rome. Clement sent for the two cardinals at dusk hour. They found the pope walking up and down his audience-chamber, apparently in great excitement. In a voice of concentrated indignation the pontiff commenced by observing that he was the most miserable and sorrowful man living, on account of the edict which his Christian majesty had granted, to the prejudice of the Holy Catholic Faith; and that he had never believed that the king intended to give effect to promises so subversive of the faith, and the oath which he had taken at his absolution; but, on the contrary, had believed that his majesty would gladly avail himself of the protests of his clergy, parliament, and university, to excuse himself to the Huguenots. That he beheld the most accursed edict promulgated; by which liberty of conscience was given to all—the most pernicious thing possible. Moreover, a damnable sect was permitted the free exercise of religious worship throughout the realm, with admission to all dignities, which would give its members opportunity

to conspire against the true faith. That the king had not been driven to the necessity of granting so horrible an edict: but whereas, in other matters his majesty had shown admirable moderation and forbearance, yet in this important affair he had menaced and demonstrated extraordinary passion; and even had gone the length of censuring the archbishop of Tours, for presuming to pray that the Almighty might influence his majesty's heart for the glory and growth of religion! "Although the king," continued his holiness, "has authoritatively commanded the publication of this execrable edict, he has never once, according to his promise, proposed the reception of the Tridentine canons to his parliament and council—the which contrast seems to us suspicious and dubious. The edict is a disgrace and a dishonour to us—we, who guaranteed the faith and orthodoxy of the king! We feel smitten on the face, and wounded by one who owes us benefits unspeakable! Nevertheless, as against the advice of many of our cardinals, and of other Christian potentates, we absolved the king, we shall have courage and resolution, in case of extremity, to annul that absolution!" After this threat Clement passionately added, "that the indignity was personal —that he was humiliated in the presence of every European potentate; and that the spiritual and political *prestige* of the Holy See was therefore reduced to the lowest ebb!"[1] The cardinals used soothing expostulations to calm the papal wrath; and d'Ossat answered at length the accusations of his holiness.

[1] Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat au Roy—Lettre 178. Such was the panic occasioned by the fury of the supreme pontiff, that d'Ossat wrote direct to the king, instead of addressing his majesty through the usual medium of M. de Villeroy.

Clement, however, abruptly terminated the conference by passing into his private apartment, without giving the accustomed benediction to the prelates; ordering them to send an express to their royal master, containing a faithful record of his words.[1] Very much astounded and downcast, the prelates waited upon Cardinal Aldobrandini and, requested the benefit of his mediation. Aldobrandini, whom the king had spared no pains to conciliate, promised to do his best, but acknowledged that his holiness was deeply exasperated, and attributed Henry's act to the evil counsels of those most in his majesty's confidence—meaning thereby to allude to madame la Duchesse, to the duke de Bouillon, Rosny, and the queen of England. The sentiments of the pope were not propitious; or indicative of a desire to grant favours such as a son very zealous, or a realm highly patronized, might win from the *bienveillance* of the occupant of St. Peter's chair.

Sillery had his first political audience at the Vatican on the 21st of March. On the matter of the royal divorce from Queen Marguerite, the pope alleged the want of the formal consent of the queen, who neither by petition nor rescript had notified to the Holy See that her desire was in accordance with that of his majesty; on the contrary, her majesty interposed a condition which had not been complied with by king Henry. Various circumstances connected with the compulsion resorted to by her late majesty Queen Catherine, to effect her daughter's marriage, were mentioned to the pope; who had personally participated in those negotiations, in his character of Auditor to the legate Alexandrini. Clement, however, seemed oblivious of every fact; and

[1] Ibid.

reiterated that the queen must join her petition to that of his majesty, in case a speedy and amicable separation was expected and desired. Concerning the legitimization of the "royal bastards," the pope demonstrated the utmost coldness and repugnance. His holiness stated that having at great pecuniary cost, diplomacy, and fervency in prayer, achieved the pacification of the realm, he could not assent to measures likely to plunge the kingdom into renewed calamity on the demise of his majesty, by the scandalous feuds certain to arise between children, the offspring of adultery, and those born in lawful wedlock—both being the sons of the same parents. Clement never mentioned the name of Gabrielle d'Estrées; his resentment being extreme at the countenance which she had afforded to the edict of Nantes. On the affair of Saluzzo, the pope said, "that his majesty would lose his repute as a Christian man, and his military *prestige*, by going to war for the restitution of the marquisate; or by insisting on a formal answer from the duke of Savoy, as stipulated by the anniversary of the signature of the peace of Vervins: it was, moreover, his intent to send the Franciscan Calatagirone, now Patriarch of Constantinople, to confer with his majesty on the subject." Clement then briefly alluded to the marriage of Madame, and declared his readiness to bestow pontifical benison on the union, when the duchesse de Bar requested such, as an obedient daughter of the Church. The pope, after giving audience to the ambassador, retired to the Quirinal to pass the Lenten season; and recommended that the petition of queen Marguerite should be obtained, which, upon certain conditions, might, after the festival of Easter, facilitate his majesty's divorce. The comments of his holiness

were the reverse of encouraging; even the usually sanguine d'Ossat expatiates guardedly on the ulterior views of the pope. The cardinal de Medici maintained grave reserve: desirous not to offend the king, he yet resolved to do nothing to aid the royal divorce while there existed possibility that the king might crown his mistress. On subjects orthodox and purely ecclesiastical Clement demonstrated, however, eager desire to meet his majesty's wishes. The famous Espinac archbishop of Lyons, dying at this period in captivity, from gout and melancholy, the pope issued letters of induction for Albert de Bellièvre, whom the king had nominated to that important see. Still more cordial was the ratification which the pope at this time accorded to the retreat of the duke de Joyeuse back to his monastery. The duke exhibited that extraordinary mixture of profligacy and devotion, which is so marked a type of the elevated personages of the sixteenth century. The life of Joyeuse, since his reconciliation with the king, had been dissipated and reckless. No trace of the ascetic Père Ange, who had only quitted his retreat at the command of the legate Landriano,[1] could be descried in the haughty soldier and *bon vivant* of the court of Henri Quatre: still less were there signs of the fanaticism which had induced the Capuchin father to play the chief part in that blasphemous procession undertaken from Paris to Chartres, to conciliate Henry III. Joyeuse, however, joined in the dissipations of the court with quailing of heart; the terrors of Divine vengeance haunted his solitary hours; and the jests of the king fell bitterly on his ear.

[1] See "History of the Reign of Henry IV.," vol. 2, bk. 2; also "Henry III. king of France: his Court and Times," vol. 3, bk. 6.

The king one day stood on the balcony of the Louvre with Joyeuse, watching the progress of a turbulent demonstration against the edict of Nantes. "Mon cousin!" exclaimed Henry, sarcastically, "these people seem to enjoy the sight of an apostate king and of an unfrocked monk!" The duke turned pale, and retired to his oratory, where he spent the night in penance and prayer. Another day Joyeuse was dining at the Louvre: the conversation was plied with freedom, and libations were poured in honour of some of the most beautiful courtezans of the capital, in all which discourse the duke participated. "There are four persons of very singular condition in this capital, to whom we have not yet drunk!" suddenly exclaimed king Henry. "I know a converted sinner, a repentant Leaguer, a renegade Capuchin, and a perverted Huguenot!"[1] The allusion stung the conscience of le Père Ange—again by rigid asceticisms he tried to stifle remorse. The marriage of the duke's youthful daughter and heiress with the duke de Montpensier was meantime celebrated during the month of March. A change then was perceived in the duke: his jovial humour departed; words of profanity, such as in this age sullied the discourse of the most illustrious personages, died shudderingly on the lips of Joyeuse; who, nevertheless, still frequented the feasts, or rather orgies, of the Hôtels de Bellegarde, Sancy, Roquelaure, Zamet, and that of M. de Rouen.

The Lenten season, meantime, commenced, and the sermons of le Père Laurens, a noted capuchin, drew crowds to the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. Amongst his hearers was Joyeuse. The fervour and

[1] The king alluded to himself, the duke de Mayenne, the duke de Joyeuse, and the duke de Lesdiguières.

exhortations of the preacher struck a responsive chord in the heart of the duke—he loathed his dissipations, and reflected with horror on his career, and on that of the companions of his lawless pleasures. About mid-Lent, therefore, the duke secretly made disposition of his vast fortune, which he settled on his daughter the duchesse de Montpensier, and nominated her husband the duke, and his brother the cardinal de Joyeuse, as co-trustees. At midnight, March 8th, Joyeuse quitted his superb hôtel and repaired on foot to his old monastery, Rue St. Honoré. Falling at the feet of the prior, the duke besought re-admission into the community, while confessing and deploring the scandal which his profligacy had brought on the order. He then repaired to the chapel, and laid on the altar his victorious sword, his rich orders, and his mantle of velvet; afterwards he assumed the habit of the order; and submitted to the tonsure. For two days the duke's retreat was not discovered; it having been his frequent habit to absent himself from his hôtel mysteriously. His private closet was at length entered by the young duchess his daughter; the deeds of settlement of his property, with other papers, were found lying conspicuously on a table; also a letter of farewell to madame de Montpensier—but none of these documents revealed the destination of Joyeuse. Search was made throughout the capital; the duke's servants, far from surmising the nature of the retreat sought by their master, made eager inquiry at the houses of the capital frequented by the profligate *noblesse*. The retreat of the duke de Joyeuse was divulged on the following Sunday by le Père Brulart, in a sermon from the pulpit of St. Germain. Motives the most various were ascribed for the retreat of Joyeuse. It

was said that a brief from the pope had reminded the renegade Capuchin of his vows: others averred that the ceaseless prayers of his mother had wrought the miracle; and again it was alleged that the spirit of his deceased wife Catherine de la Valette had appeared to the duke, and conjured him to earn reunion with herself by a life of godly repentance and devotion. Henry, when apprized of the retreat of Joyeuse, visited him in his monastery; and retired deeply affected by the interview. Henry had been greeted no longer by the wit and the boon companion: but from the lips of Joyeuse his majesty listened to a homily evidently too sincere to provoke resentment. He besought the king to revoke his recent edict given at Nantes; to put away his mistress; and to purge the court from the profligate example of certain among the courtiers; to honour religion in the person of her ministers; and to pay canonical obedience to the supreme pontiff.[1] Le Père Ange, who had formerly been a preacher of renown, immediately resumed his ministrations; and discoursed with such fervour against the court and its pleasures, and on the iniquity of the recent edict, that Henry was at length compelled to interpose. The preacher Sillery, brother of M. de Sillery, Henry's envoy to Rome, likewise distinguished himself in pulpit invective. The king wrote to the cardinal de Joyeuse complaining of the disloyal sermons of le Père Ange; and suggested that unless the Holy Father desired the suppression of the Capuchin communities, it would

[1] Vie du cardinal de Joyeuse. Mém. de Villeroy, p. 319, et seq. De Thou—Hilarion de Coste—Eloges des Hommes Illustres du 16ème siecle. Le Laboureur—Additions aux Mém. de Michel de Castelnau, t. 2. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644, et seq.

be wise to summon Joyeuse from Paris. This hint was acted upon with alacrity; and le Père Ange was translated to the Capuchin monastery of Toulouse. Subsequently, he was created Provincial of the order; and repaired for a season to Rome, where the honour of the cardinalate was bestowed on a brother so illustrious and zealous.[1]

The opposition made by queen Marguerite to her divorce, and the consequent complications at Rome, meantime, greatly provoked the king, and rendered him more than ever resolved to place madame Gabrielle on the throne of France. The threat of the king, again renewed at this period, to institute a state prosecution against queen Marguerite in case she further opposed his will, created consternation both in France and Rome. The deviations of the queen were notorious: her trial, therefore, could only terminate by a sentence of decapitation; or in divorce and captivity in a fortress for life. Henry spoke bitterly and decidedly; and waited only the dismissal of M. de Sillery from Rome to take all necessary measures. To Cheverny his chancellor, the king now expressed himself without reserve. His majesty said:—"That as his physicians doubted whether legitimate posterity might be vouchsafed to him, he had resolved upon the marriage in question, and on the recognition as princes of the blood of the sons God had already given him; in order that the close of his life might not be imbittered, as was that of Henry III., by the squabbles and dissensions of the princes of the royal lineage." The duchess likewise acknowledged to her most intimate friends, "that the hand of God, or the demise of the king,

[1] Aubéry—Hist. du cardinal de Joyeuse. Bassompierre—Journal de ma vie: Prem. Partie.

could now alone prevent her from becoming their queen!" The depression of the duchess was, nevertheless, great; which inspired belief that she attached more importance to the obstacles opposing her marriage than she chose to avow. Her health had suffered during the illness of the king; and she was now subject to sudden faintings, an inconvenience which Gabrielle had not experienced during any of her previous pregnancies. The mind of the duchess, moreover, was unhinged by the predictions of astrologers, whom she consulted on her destinies with a faith profound as that of the late queen-mother. "Madame de Beaufort," says Sully, "had an escort of diviners which followed her everywhere. What is most surprising, however, they never announced to her anything but misfortune. One told her that she would be married only once; another that she would die young; another that she would be betrayed by her friends, all which predictions threw her into black melancholy. Gracienne, one of her waiting-women, told me that the impression made on madame la Duchesse by these warnings was so strong that she used often to dismiss her attendants, and pass the night in tears." An incident said to have happened at this period confirmed these sinister prognostics. Madame de Beaufort was one day walking in the garden of the Tuileries, when she met the celebrated astrologer Coiffier, who had predicted the demise of Charles IX. and Henry III. Gabrielle entered into conversation with the sage; and requested him to say whether she would attain supreme elevation? Coiffier refused, and counselled the duchess to be content with her prosperous present fortune. "At any rate, monsieur, tell me by what death I shall die," persisted the duchess.

Coiffier hesitated; but perceiving that the duchess began to be displeased at his refusals, he desired her to look into a small mirror pendent by her side, wherein he told her she would behold the solution of her destiny. Gabrielle courageously looked—and beheld an image of herself, with features distorted and wild, struggling in the embrace of a demon who grasped her by the throat.[1]

The king repaired to Fontainebleau at the commencement of March, 1599, to pass there the season of Lent. Madame la Duchesse generally remained in retirement at her own hôtel during this penitential period; as Henry was careful not to wound unnecessarily the religious scruples of his subjects. Gabrielle, however, insisted upon accompanying his majesty; and showed such depression and general indisposition, that Henry could not refuse his assent. At Fontainebleau madame la Duchesse was installed in the apartments always assigned to the queen, and contiguous to La Chambre Ovale. The suite which accompanied the king was limited, and consisted of the dukes de Bellegarde and de Retz, the marshal d'Ornano, MM. de Bassompierre and Le Varenne, the marshal de Roquelaure, besides several ladies in the confidence of the duchess. It was apprehended, nevertheless, that the scandal would be great if the king passed Passion-week in the society of his mistress. Henry was desirous of conciliating his holiness; the more especially as the queen, intimidated by the threats and pressure exercised, had consented to authorize a preliminary inquiry into the circumstances of her marriage; and had signed a document, in which she supplicated the pope so to ordain. The sensation occasioned throughout France, and especially amongst

[1] Galanteries des Rois de France, t. 1—Sauval.

the courtiers, by this first approximation of facts to the well-known desires of the king and the duchess, was indescribable. The personages around the king thereupon united in advising him to send the duchess to keep Easter in Paris—in order, it was alleged, that her piety might be made apparent to her future subjects. Henry agreed to this proposal, which he also thought politic; and, moreover, arranged that the duchess should become the guest of M. Zamet, whose magnificent hôtel was close to the Arsenal; instead of taking up her residence in the Louvre. The wealthy financier had often been honoured by royal sojourners under his roof. Henry had selected the hôtel Zamet as his rendezvous for those convivial meetings, so intensely enjoyed by his majesty; but which the decorum of royalty banished from the Louvre. It was there, also, that the king met the flower of the Paris *bourgeoisie;* and many ladies not eligible for formal presentation at court. M. Zamet, meantime, enjoyed his popularity, and lent his palace to the king and the courtiers, without presuming on his generosity. The splendid feasts, and the intrigues matured under the roof of the wealthy financier, passed into a proverb: Zamet welcomed all, and served all. The dearth of money during the wars of the league aided Zamet's rise. He therefore had been honoured by the notice of M. de Mayenne, who sent him on various diplomatic errands to the king; knowing, that where risk might attend such missions to another, the "lord of seventeen hundred thousand gold crowns" incurred little danger. Zamet came to France in the suite of Catherine de Medici as shoemaker to the princess. He continued to fill that capacity up to the reign of Henry III., when the king, fascinated by his humorous jests,

gave him an appointment in the farming of *la gabelle*. The fortune of the subtle and enterprizing Italian was made—he derived immense profits from the revenue; and became usurer in chief to the king and his courtiers—but withal with such good nature and modesty as to obtain universal patronage. Zamet trafficked in loans, diamonds, fans, perfumes, and intrigue; and never incurred loss, pecuniary or social, from scruples. During the league Zamet's affluence increased; so that at the commencement of the reign of Henri Quatre his wealth was enormous, and so skilfully realized, that Rosny's stringent reforms in the farming of the revenue but slightly diminished its amount. Zamet commenced his career at the court of Henri IV. by paying devoted homage to Gabrielle d'Estrées; and through the influence of the duchess his marriage with Madelaine le Clerc and the birth of three illegitimate children [1] was legalized, that the glory of becoming the founder of a family might appertain to the fortunate shoemaker of king Henry III. Zamet was of course especially patronized by the lords of the court of Italian origin his countrymen—such as the duke de Retz, the marshal d'Ornano, the cardinal de Gondy, and the members of the Strozzi family naturalized in France. The two former noblemen,

[1] Zamet's eldest son, baron de Murat et de Billy, died in 1621. He married Jeanne de Goth, niece of M. d'Epernon. From this marriage sprang a son, who died in infancy; and one daughter, Catherine Zamet, heiress of the lucky shoemaker of Henri III., who also became the heiress of her great uncle, the duke d'Epernon. Catherine Zamet married Roger Hector de Pardaillan de Gondrin, marquis d'Antin. She was the mother of the marquis de Montespan, husband of the celebrated mistress of Louis XIV., Athenäis de Rochechouart de Mortemart, marquise de Montespan.

Retz and Ornano, were strongly opposed to the elevation of the favourite; and were surpassed only by Sancy in the bitterness with which they descanted upon the topic. The comments of the papal legate de Medici, moreover, seemed to sanction the undoubted aspirations of the *noblesse*, that some expedient might be devised for the downfall of the duchess, even should the alternative be the sacrifice of her life. Indeed, the infatuation of the king, in his project of again subjecting the realm to the anarchy and ruin of a second contested succession, was certain to concentrate upon the head of the unfortunate Gabrielle the vengeance of those aggrieved by such decision. The court, the people, the parliament, and foreign powers, were now convinced beyond the possibility of misapprehension as to Henry's intentions respecting Gabrielle d'Estrées. Time was precious: the king desired that the child to which the duchess was shortly to give birth should be born in wedlock—the more so, after the opinion on his own health pronounced by La Rivière. The reluctance of Rome, therefore, and that displayed by queen Marguerite—who had not dared to withhold her signature to the first preliminary—might be suddenly vanquished by the fiat of the victorious king. The arrangement for Gabrielle's separation from the king, though only to be of a week's duration, seemed to plunge madame de Beaufort into still darker despondency: and presentiments of evil, it is said, haunted her dreams. On the night of Palm Sunday the duchess dreamed that she was overtaken, and about to be consumed by a fierce fire. She awoke with a scream; and rising retired to her *garde-robe* to weep. Henry's night visions, meantime, had not been less ominous—on rising, he

related that he thought he had seen madame la Duchesse in her death agonies.[1] The following day, Monday in Passion week, the duchess commenced her journey. The king escorted her to Melun, riding by the side of her litter, attended by the duke de Retz, Roquelaure, the duke de Montbazon, the marshal d'Ornano, and MM. de Frontenac and la Varenne.[2] The king comforted his mistress, who wept during the whole progress, by promising to despatch du Fresne, under-secretary of state, to Rome, to insist that the documents authorizing the divorce and their marriage should be forwarded without delay; while he reminded the duchess that the spectacle of her devotions during the sacred week would greatly edify the Paris populace. The duchess was to take boat at Melun, and perform the journey to the capital by water. On taking leave of the king the fortitude of madame de Beaufort gave way: she recommended to his majesty's care her children,[3] her castle of Monceaux, where she said the happiest moments of her life had been spent, and her servants. She embraced Henry, and said "farewell," only to throw herself again and again on the neck of the king, exclaiming that a fatal presentiment warned her that their parting would be final. Henry also wept; and strove by soothing words to allay this agitation.

At length totally overcome, he declared that no consideration should separate him from his

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644.

[2] Ibid.—Cheverny, Sully, Aubigné. Bassompierre—Journal de ma Vie—première partie. Bassompierre was in high favour with madame de Beaufort, who requested that he might travel to Paris in her boat.

[3] "Son César, Alexandre, et sa Henriette," writes Rosny, sneeringly, in les Economies Royales.

mistress; and clasping the half fainting form of Gabrielle, he bore her from the boat back towards her litter. The cavaliers, however, gathered round his majesty, and represented in the strongest terms the policy of allowing the duchess to perform her devotions in public during the ensuing week; adding, that it was believed she was inclined to heresy, which alone rendered the people indisposed towards her proclamation as queen.[1] Henry vacillated: the arguments used, however, seem to have had effect on the duchess herself, who voluntarily returned, though with sighs and tears, to the boat. Henry then committed Gabrielle to the care of M. de la Varenne, the duke de Montbazon, and to the marshal d'Ornano, with commands that she should receive royal honours in the capital; and take up her abode if she so desired in the Louvre. Henry watched for an interval the progress of the boat up the river. Gabrielle once rose and extended her arms towards the king; but the lords of the escort surrounded his majesty; and at length succeeded in inducing him to return to Fontainebleau.

Madame la Duchesse, meantime, arrived safely in Paris, and landed late the same night at the Arsenal. Zamet and a train of gentlemen, with torchbearers, was ready to escort her to his hôtel, which was close at hand. The following day the duchess rested, feeling slightly indisposed: in the evening an express

[1] Mathieu states that there was a pecuniary inducement for the visit of the duchess to the capital—the ratification of the patent by which Henry gave her the revenue of the town of Châteauneuf en l'Perche—t. 2. "The king venerated this lady more than his God; and was perpetually occupied with her, or concerning her affairs," writes an author, whose relation is in manuscript.

from the king comforted her greatly. On Wednesday the principal personages in Paris called to pay their respects to madame la Duchesse. M. de Rosny was amongst the number. Gabrielle received the now powerful minister with gracious courtesy; and tried to extract his sentiments upon her approaching elevation. Rosny, however, states that while profusely reciprocating the civilities of this reception, he feigned not to understand her allusions—a *finesse* very unworthy of that astute personage; for Gabrielle's elevation was regarded as an accomplished fact, from the period when, during the festivities which followed the peace of Vervins, the duchess appeared attended by a princess of the rank of madame de Guise, in the capacity of *grande maitresse*. Madame de Rosny also called at the hôtel Zamet. Gabrielle received this lively lady with mingled *hauteur* and condescension; and told her that she might attend her *levées* whenever she chose, an intimation which greatly piqued M. de Rosny.[1] On the evening of the same day M. and madame de Rosny quitted Paris for their château of Rosny, where they were to entertain the princess of Orange,[2] ex-abbess of Jouarre. Cheverny also departed for Eclimont; du Fresne[3] left for Fontainebleau, where he had been summoned by the king. Madame de Sourdis, whose relations with her niece had not latterly been so cordial owing to the commands of the king, who deemed that the evil repute of the former was injurious to Gabrielle, was spending Lent at her castle of Alluye. Mademoiselle de

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 10ème.

[2] Charlotte de Bourbon Montpensier.

[3] Under-secretary of state—the firm friend of madame la Duchesse.

Guise, also visited madame de Beaufort, for whose society she showed great predilection; going so far in her admiration as to take the beautiful duchess as her authority in matters of dress, and frequently imitating her attire. On Holy Thursday, Zamet provided a magnificent repast,[1] at which every viand permitted to be served in Lent appeared. After dinner madame de Beaufort repaired to the church of St. Antoine to hear mass—the service called in the Romish ritual "*Tenèbres.*" This church was the fashionable resort of the *beau monde* of Paris, as the music was fine, and the preacher popular. The duchesses de Guise and de Retz, and mademoiselle de Guise, accompanied the duchess thither. The princesses drove to the church, each in her coach; madame la Duchesse went in her litter, which was escorted by guards, an officer walking at each portal.[2] The church was filled with a crowded congregation, all anxiously expecting the arrival of la Duchesse, as the priests waited her appearance to commence the service. A side chapel had been reserved for Gabrielle, into which she entered, followed by the princesses her companions; and especially attended by madame de Guise, who seems on all occasions to have prided herself in her functions about the person of the queen elect. Mademoiselle de Guise relates that Gabrielle beckoned to her, and presently commenced a conversation in a low voice, joining only at intervals in the service. She showed mademoiselle de Guise letters which she had just received from Rome, containing assurances that the royal

[1] "Elle avait mangé toutes viandes excellentes, et preparées à son gout."—Sully.

[2] "Les amours de Henri le Grand, par Louise Marguerite de Lorraine Guise," who records what she witnessed.

divorce would soon be pronounced; also the duchess displayed two epistles from the king, written since she bade him farewell, "passionate, and full of expressions of impatience to hail her queen."[1] The service being concluded, madame la Duchesse requested mademoiselle de Guise to follow her to Zamet's, where, as she felt giddy and indisposed, she intended to retire to bed. On arriving the duchess complained of nausea, and asked for some acid beverage. A fine citron was brought by her host in person, which was eagerly accepted by the duchess.[2] She had no sooner partaken of the fruit than Gabrielle complained of a sensation of heat in the throat, and of spasms in the stomach. The duchess retired to her chamber, and was under the hands of her women when mademoiselle de Guise arrived. "I found la Duchesse," relates she, "attended by her women, who were undressing her: she complained to me of violent head-ache. A few minutes elapsed when she fell forwards, her limbs at the same time being convulsed." On recovering, the unfortunate duchess, with tears, uttered the word "poison,"[3] and declared that she had been assassinated. She rose, and insisted immediately on leaving the abode of Zamet, for the house of her aunt madame de Sourdis, in the Cloître St. Germain, with the intent, on the following day, of removing to the Louvre. Whilst

[1] Ibid.—"La duchesse fut prise de quelque, eblouissements qui la firent revenir promptement chez Zamet."

[2] D'Aubigné—Hist. Universelle. Le Grain—Decade de Henri le Grand. "Elle sentit aussi-tôt," says d'Aubigné, "un feu au gosier, et des tranchées furieuses."

[3] The physicians termed the seizures "apoplectic convulsion fits." The duchess was within two months of her accouchement.

her litter was being prepared, the duchess sat down and wrote to the king. When so employed a letter was presented to her from his majesty, which had just arrived by express. Gabrielle eagerly opened the missive; but whilst she was perusing it her face was observed to become slightly suffused, and the next moment she fell into a second syncope. The duchess, on her partial recovery from this seizure, was carried to her litter, and transported to the house of madame de Sourdis, on her own peremptory bidding.[1] From thence she despatched a messenger to summon her aunt. The night passed in anguish—sickness and convulsions returned; but, subsiding towards morning, were succeeded by an interval of repose, which gave her attendants hope. The next day, however, the sufferings of the duchess were excessive: fainting fits and convulsions continued without abatement. The doctors summoned gazed on in helpless wonder. Even the famous La Rivière, on being sent for express, approached the bed, and gazing on the once fair form, covered his eyes with his hands, and exclaiming, "*Hic est manus Domini!*" rushed from the apartment.[2] In her delirium Gabrielle called upon the king in piteous accents; and prayed to be transported so that she might take a last farewell of him. "Madame la Duchesse lay with her eyes wide open and turned; her once beautiful face was livid, and her mouth distorted," says an

[1] "Madame la Duchesse demanda avec empressement qu'on la tirât promptement de cette maison, et qu'on la portât en celle de madame de Sourdis: ce qu'on fut contraint de faire à cause de la passion extreme qu'elle temoignait avoir de delogez du logis du Sieur Zamet."—Lettre de la Varenne (an eye-witness) au Duc de Sully

[2] Dupleix Hist. de Henri IV., p. 262.—D'Aubigné, t. 3

eye-witness of the scene.[1] The princesses of Guise had all taken to flight; the illness was horrible and mysterious, and nobody had courage to soothe the agonies of the unhappy Gabrielle. At length madame de Martigues, grandmother of mademoiselle de Mercœur, the *fiancée* of Gabrielle's young son César, volunteered her services until the arrival of madame de Sourdis. It is related that madame de Martigues, while reciting with apparent devotion portions of the office of the day,[2] contrived to appropriate several superb diamond rings, which she drew from the fingers of the dying woman. An officer, who had watched the manœuvre, when madame de Martigues quitted the apartment, advanced and requested her to restore her spoil; as an inventory existed of the contents of the jewel cabinet of madame la Duchesse, and the king would doubtless require strict account.[3] An express at nightfall, announcing the illness of the duchess, was despatched by La Varenne to the king, to M. de Rosny, and to the chancellor. The aspect of the city of Paris, meantime, coincided with the tragedy enacting therein. The churches were hung with black, as customary on Good Friday; the bells tolled dismally; and the streets were thronged with personages attired in mourning, who congregated in crowds, all aghast at the news, in the vicinity of the Cloître St. Germain. Such was the panic and confusion, that the chamber even of the duchess was not sacred from intrusion; and several personages actually forced

[1] "Le Samedi matin, les convulsions lui avoient tourné la bouche sur le derrière du cou."—Mathieu—De Thou, liv. 122.

[2] Good Friday 1599.

[3] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. fol. 1644. "Madame de Martigues avait déjà accommodé ces bagues au bout de son chapelet."

their way in to gaze upon the spectacle, the report of which had appalled the people of Paris. During the evening of Good Friday the condition of the duchess grew worse; and she gave birth to the son whom king Henry was prepared to greet with the lofty titles of Dauphin of France, heir of the Christian king. The child was still-born; and it was said, bore marks of the violent malady to which its unfortunate mother had fallen a victim. For a few minutes Gabrielle rallied, and asked for writing implements. She however soon relapsed into insensibility, from which she never revived; and she died in the middle of the night of Friday, April 10th.[1]

The first missive sent by La Varenne to the king was scarcely despatched when it was apparent that the duchess was sinking fast. To prevent the king from arriving in Paris, La Varenne therefore wrote a second letter, announcing the death of the duchess—though she had not actually expired; on the plea that he and his colleagues desired to spare his majesty so afflicting a spectacle. This statement, La Varenne probably made in good faith, as far as he was himself concerned; for his suspicions were strongly roused as to the origin of madame de Beaufort's malady, which, as will be seen, he hesitates not to state in a letter to Rosny. Other personages, however, doubtless had the strongest interest that

[1] "Elle expira," says Sully, "dans des revolutions et un bouleversement de la nature capable d'inspirer l'horreur et l'effroi." Dreux de Radier—Vie de Gabrielle d'Estrées.—"Elle perdit la veue, l'ouie et les autres sens, excepté de celluy du sentiment. Car on luy vid la nuit du dit jeudi au vendredi, et tout le vendredi, et l'autre nuit suivante, ressentir et souffrir de si cruelles et si excessives douleurs et tourmens que tous ceux qui la voyaient reçurent un extreme estonnement."—Cheverny. Mém. d'Etat—Bassompierre—Journal de ma Vie.

Henry should not gaze on the remains of his cherished mistress. The king, meantime, received the few lines written by Gabrielle; but was persuaded by those around that the indisposition was temporary, and arising from causes common to women when pregnant. On the arrival of La Varenne's first epistle Henry was much agitated, and set off on the moment from Fontainebleau on horseback, attended by Bassompierre, Bellegarde, and de Retz. His majesty spoke not a word during his journey; but the extreme pallor of his face demonstrated his anguish. As soon as madame de Beaufort breathed her last, the marshal d'Ornano and La Varenne rode to meet the king; as they doubted not that Henry would have left for Paris before the second express sent by the latter could reach Fontainebleau. These noblemen met the king near to Villejuif. By their haste, and the expression of their faces, Henry read the loss which had befallen him. He tried to greet the cavaliers; but his lips quivered, and he fell back fainting into the arms of Bellegarde.[1] Henry was conveyed to the adjacent abbey of Saussaye and laid on a bed. During the first moments of grief the king would suffer no one to remain with him but Bellegarde, who was himself deeply affected. When sufficiently recovered, the king announced his intention to proceed to Paris, and view the remains of his beloved "consort." The surgeons had, however, proceeded to embalm and shroud the corpse; which, they stated, it was necessary immediately to enclose in lead. Bellegarde and Roquelaure therefore entreated the king to return to Fontainebleau. An

[1] Le Grain—Decade de Henri le Grand. Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 3. Mém. de Bassompierre, t. 1, p. 69-70, et seq. Amours de Henri le Grand, par Louise Marguerite de Lorraine Guise.

empty coach from Paris fortunately arriving during the evening at Villejuif, his majesty was partly persuaded and partly compelled to enter it and return. On arriving at the palace, the *Salle de la Belle Cheminée* was thronged with noblemen, who had travelled post from Paris to offer condolences. Henry shuddered; but advanced and in unsteady tones requested all present to return to the capital, excepting those gentlemen whose names he should indicate to M. le Grand.[1] Henry only desired the presence of Bassompierre,[2] Bellegarde, Roquelaure, de Retz, and Frontenac. Having dismissed the importunate throng, the king retired with M. la Varenne to hear every circumstance connected with the catastrophe. He next despatched a courier to summon M. de Rosny. The messenger took a detail of the demise of the duchess from the pen of La Varenne; but only a message from the king. Rosny, according to his own narrative, was more surprised by this catastrophe than by any previous event of his life. "I was in bed, the light just beginning to dawn, conversing with madame de Rosny, when I heard the bell of the outer gate of the château ring; and as no one answered, the peal was violently repeated. I rose and called a footman, as I heard the words uttered in a loud voice, '*de la part du roi!*' I descended, therefore, in the greatest alarm. The courier announced that he had travelled all night, to deliver the message from the king—that I was to repair instantly to Fontainebleau. His face looked so sor-

[1] M. le Grand Ecuyer duc de Bellegarde—Bellegarde was generally called M. le Grand.

[2] "Bassompierre," said his majesty, "vous avez été le dernier auprès de ma maitresse, demeurez aussi auprès de moi pour m'en entretenir."—Journal de ma Vie.

rowful that I asked if the king was ill? The man replied, 'No; but his majesty is overwhelmed with grief—madame la Duchesse is dead!' I commanded him to repeat his news several times; so improbable did his relation appear. When I could no longer doubt its veracity, my spirit was divided between my sorrow for the affliction of the king, and my thankfulness for the benefit which this catastrophe would confer on France. This last sentiment prevailed. I reflected that my prince, by a few transitory pangs, was about to purchase exemption from cruel anguish and remorse. I therefore again ascended to the apartment of my wife. I then said to madame de Rosny, 'You will never have to present yourself at the *levées* of the Duchess—she is dead!'"[1] Rosny then perused the letters sent to him by La Varenne. Ominous passages occur therein, which if Rosny in reality was ignorant of the danger which menaced madame de Beaufort, must have given him subject for painful meditation. La Varenne relates the circumstances connected with the *recherché* repast served by Zamet for the duchess, of which she partook with appetite: he then adds, by way of parenthesis, "You will please to note this fact with your accustomed prudence: my wisdom suffices not, nor is it subtle enough, to draw deductions from inferences of things not subsequently fully apparent."[2] The conviction expressed by the unfortunate Gabrielle that poison had been administered to her, and her frenzied entreaties to be carried from the abode of M. Zamet, are graphically recorded. After perusing this letter little doubt can remain as to the opinion of the

[1] Mém. du duc de Sully, liv. 10ème.

[2] Lettre de M. la Varenne, Economies Royales, p. 423, vol. 1, in fol.

writer, who cautiously deems it prudent to insinuate, rather than to accuse. M. de Rosny immediately started for Fontainebleau, where he joined his majesty on the evening of Easter Sunday. The chancellor de Cheverny, meantime, received information of the illness of the duchess from madame de Sourdis, who arrived at daybreak on Saturday at the château of Eclimont, on her road to Paris. Her distress was excessive; she remained half an hour in conversation with the chancellor on the mysterious circumstances, and then proceeded to Paris, Cheverny lending her horses. During the day one of the chancellor's secretaries brought the news of the demise of the duchess. Cheverny's reflections on the event, like those of all the other assumed friends of the duchess, express thankfulness that the complications raised by her charms were obviated; mingled with speculations as to whether they had individually profited to the utmost by her influence, and the counting of their gains.[1] Cheverny sent a message of condolence to the king, requesting permission to wait upon his majesty; and also a direction whether he should do so alone, or attended by the clerks of his *chancellerie*. Henry sent a mournful answer—the which, however, Cheverny does not record—inviting his chancellor to see him after a little space.

When Rosny arrived he found the king walking up and down the Galerie de Diane alone in the departing twilight. "The king was in such trouble, that the very sight of a companion was insupportable." Rosny gives us the process which he adopted to pour consolation into

[1] "En cette sorte mourut la dite duchesse avec deplaisir pour nous tous, qui pouvions participer au bonheur de sa fortune; et avec grand estonnement, et bel example à toutes autres femmes ses semblables."—Mém. d'Etat du Chancelier de Cheverny.

the aching heart of his royal master. Not a word does the clever secretary record of conferences relative to the dark suspicions present in the minds of all; and which must have formed part of their commune. Rosny commenced by quoting a few verses of Scripture; and by recommending submission to the Divine will in affliction, with the same thankful spirit as that with which blessing is received. "I dared to represent to the king that perhaps one day he might thank God for this blow. I tried to compel him to realize the overwhelming position in which he would have been placed had the duchess lived, drawn towards her as his majesty was by the chain of tender regard, and yet divided by the dictates of honour and duty. Heaven had removed the obstacles to his majesty's marriage, upon which depended the repose of France, the joy of his people, and the welfare of Europe; blessings, which his majesty would have deemed too dearly purchased at the cost of the forsaking of a woman worthy of his attachment by her thousand good qualities."[1] Rosny avers that Henry became more cheerful under the influence of his remonstrances; and seemed especially gratified that his minister admitted the claims and fascination of the duchess.

In Paris, meantime; the funeral obsequies of the duchesse de Beaufort were proceeded with in royal

[1] In the Economies Royales, Rosny gives at length the speeches he made to his royal master on the occasion. This first and original edition of the Mémoires de Sully, termed by the latter "Economies Royales, Politiques et Militaires," was written under the eye of the then veteran statesman by his secretaries. The style is very wearisome and laboured: the secretaries address their master throughout the narration, and recount deeds and speeches; as, "Alors, monseigneur, vous fites ceci, ou vous avez dit cela."

state and pageantry—for such was the absolute command of the king. The *post-mortem* examination of the remains of the duchess was secretly made during the night of Saturday, April 11th. Not the slightest record of the autopsy is extant—but great trouble was taken to allay the suspicion of poison. Of all the contemporary authors who insinuate their suspicions on the circumstances of the demise of Gabrielle d'Estrées, Aubigné is the only historian who boldly uses the word "poison." But who was the assassin of the duchess? or was her death the result of a combination entered into by certain high personages for state reasons? The only avowed enemy made by the duchess was Sancy—a desperate, daring, unprincipled man, who from the first opposed her elevation — conduct which had occasioned his disgrace, and virtual exile from the court. All the ministers deprecated Henry's intentions; and demonstrated the utmost concern as to the results of the royal resolve—but who may dare attach suspicion of so foul a crime to men of repute so glorious, and public honour apparently so unsullied, as Rosny the future duke de Sully, Villefoy, and Bellièvre? The historian Mezerai sententiously says, "The death of Gabrielle d'Estrées ensued at the instigation of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning." Gabrielle d'Estrées had powerful enemies in certain members of the Gallican church—men whose zeal induced them to obey every signal from Rome, and who maintained in France intimate *liaison* with the nobles of Italian origin—and the dread manifested by pope Clement, lest he should be called upon to assent to the union of the king with Madame Gabrielle, was well known.

Not the slightest index of king Henry's opinion on

the tragic occurrence is on record—he showed neither suspicion nor resentment towards any one. Not the smallest allusion to the manner of the death of the duchess made by his majesty has been transmitted. It was, however, a leading principle in Henry's political conduct, as also an element of his wonderful success over obstacles apparently insuperable, to accept *le fait accompli*; to mitigate the evil, if possible; but never to make a swarm of enemies by vague accusation or harassing suspicion. By never referring to unpleasant and non-established antecedents, Henry retained his influence; and secured the cohesion of parties and the allegiance of individuals whom a menacing insinuation might alarm and eventually alienate. The death of madame la Duchesse was doubtless accelerated: the actual criminal, however, whether M. Zamet or M. de Sancy, was one of a powerful clique. Some of the chief personages of the realm might be compromised; a judicial investigation of the facts of the death of the duchess would not elucidate a mystery artfully infolded; but it might convulse the realm, and fill the court with hatred and disaffection. Such without doubt would be the line of argument adopted by M. de Rosny—and such sacrifice to expediency Henry had more than once sanctioned.

The mortal remains of madame de Beaufort lay in state in the chamber in which she expired on Easter Monday. More than twenty thousand people sprinkled her bier with holy water. The princesses in Paris performed the same ceremony. The following day the coffin was transported to the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and placed under a superb catafalque reared before the high altar. A solemn requiem was chanted, at which the court was present,

the cavaliers and ladies being attired in mourning habiliments. The father of the unfortunate duchess, her six sisters, her brother, and brother-in-law the marshal de Balagny, with eight noblemen, officiated as chief mourners. The *cortége*, on the conclusion of the service, set out for the abbey of Maubuisson, where the duchess was to be interred.[1] The corpse rested in the cathedral of St. Denis during the night of the 14th, surrounded by the honours paid to the royal dead. The obsequies were performed at Maubuisson; the abbess Angelique d'Estrées and her nuns receiving the body at the portal of the beautiful church. A vault had been excavated in front of the high altar, in which the mortal remains of the duchess were deposited.[2] The king assumed for the first nine days mourning of black cloth—his majesty then wore the customary royal mourning of purple velvet. An order was promulgated commanding a court mourning. No persons were permitted to present themselves before the

[1] The poet Sigogne composed the following ribald lines while watching the convoy pass before his window:—

"J'ai vu passer sous ma fenêtre
Les six pechez mortals vivant
Conduits par le Bâtard d'un Prêtre.
Qui tous alloient chantans
Un Requiescat in pace,
Pour le Septième trepassé."

The "six pechéz mortals" were the sisters of la Duchesse; "le bâtard d'un Prêtre," Balagny, illegitimate son of the famous bishop of Valence Jean de Mouthec.

[2] Journal de Henri IV. Mém. de Cheverny chancelier de France.—MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., fol. 1644. Numerous poets wrote elegies on the demise of the duchesse.—Muses Françaises: Regret de Daphnis sur la mort de sa belle Astrée. (Estrées), Tombeau de la duchesse de Beaufort, par Porchères, etc.

king except attired in black—and the church of St. Germain retained its sable draperies for several weeks. If Gabrielle d'Estrées had attained the crown, that fatal object of her ambition, she could not have been mourned with more *appareil* and outward veneration. The parliament of Paris, meantime, deferred to the memory of the duchess a signal honour never before granted to a private individual — the Chambers convened a special session, and voted an address of condolence to the king on the lamented demise of madame la Duchesse. "The resolve of the king to espouse the said illustrious lady, and the steps which he had actually taken in the face of Europe to accomplish that design, induced the High Court to depart from the usage which limited the presentation of such condolence to the demise of personages of the blood-royal." Deputies were at once nominated to proceed to Fontainebleau to communicate to his majesty the sympathy in his affliction of the members of the highest court in the realm.[1]

Warmer condolence, however, the king received from the generous and impulsive heart of Madame, who had personally little reason to mourn the demise of la Duchesse. As soon as the tidings reached Nancy the duke and duchesse de Bar despatched a courier with letters for the king. Madame wrote the following epistle of cordial sympathy :—

Madame Catherine Duchesse de Bar[2] *to the King.*

MON CHER ROY—I have heard of the extreme sorrow

[1] Mém. de Maintenon, liv. 5, p. 48.—Dreux de Radier, Vie de Gabrielle d'Estrées.

[2] Recueil de Lettres Missives, t. 5.—Berger de Xivrey.

which has befallen you: words cannot palliate your affliction; therefore, I use them only to assure you that I feel your grief as becomes the perfect affection which I bear you; and my own mourning for the loss of a true friend. I should greatly have desired to be with you at this season to offer you the humble service which I owe. Believe, my dear king, that I shall always love, and act the part of a mother to my nephews and niece:[1] and I humbly beg to remind you that you once promised to confide my said niece to my care. If it should still please you to give her to me, I will care for her as if she were my own child. Monsieur my husband testifies to you his regrets by the courier whom he has sent. Would to God, my dear king, that I could alleviate your grief by the sacrifice of several years of my life—I would tender them joyfully in the intensity of the love I bear you. Believe this truth! I kiss you a thousand times, my dear and brave king.

"CATHERINE."

King Henry replied as follows:—

The King to Madame Catherine.

"MY DEAR SISTER—I derived great consolation from your letter: the which I needed, for my affliction is incomparable as was the person who inspires it—plaints and regrets will attend me to the tomb. Nevertheless, as by the will of God I was born for this realm, and not for my own pleasure, my mind and my efforts will in future be solely directed for the welfare and preservation of this kingdom. The root of my love is withered—never will it again revive! Nevertheless, my friendship will always be verdant and flourishing for you, my dear sister, whom I embrace a million of times. This 15th day of April, 1599, at Fontainebleau."[2]

[1] César, Alexandre, and Catherine-Henriette de Vendôme.

[2] Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.—Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, 407, fol. 35, MS.

Queen Marguerite likewise forwarded an appropriate condolence; though in a letter to Rosny she does not hesitate again to apply to Gabrielle the offensive epithet of "*cette decriée baggasse*," to whom a year previously she had addressed so fulsome an appeal. Universal gladness, however, seemed to inspire every order in the realm, despite the numerous addresses of condolence forwarded, that God in his providence had been pleased to take the life of la Duchesse; so that the king might now espouse a consort worthy to share his throne. This conclusion, however, might have been premature; and but for an unforeseen accident the people, who little understood the character of their king, would have had cause to deplore the catastrophe. Each contemporary historian, even the most assiduous in former devotion to the duchess, who records the event of her death, entered his cabinet secretly to append some suitable moral to his relation for the benefit of posterity. Cheverny, the especial *protegé* of the duchess, and whom she had enormously enriched, ungratefully adds to his relation, "that the death of the duchess, though fraught with regret to us who shared her fortune, *etait bel example a toutes autres femmes ses semblables.*" The opinion of M. de Rosny has already been recorded. The satisfaction of the princes of the blood may be illustrated by the conduct of their chief, the young Condé. When the intelligence first reached St. Germain madame de Condé entered the apartment, and seeing her son sitting apart in a corner, his face partly covered with his mantle, *et faisant le dolent*, asked what ailed him? For some time the prince kept his woful countenance, and, shaking his head, refused to answer. At length, on being pressed by his mother, Condé burst into a fit of laughter, and

rising, exclaimed joyously, "*Madame! la Duchesse est morte!*" Condé after a time resumed his mournful attitude; and accepted with perfect dissimulation the condolences of his governor and household, "cleverly counterfeiting sorrow to please the king—a trait very notable[1] in the character of a prince only eleven years old!" adds the chronicler, satirically. The king, meantime, continued overwhelmed with gloomy despondency. A few days after the reception of Madame's letter, his majesty proceeded to St. Germain to see his children; and to give directions concerning the effects, furniture, and jewels of the duchess. The king resumed the jewels of the crown once in the possession of Gabrielle—all the furniture, lands, and diamonds, which he had presented to her, Henry settled on her children. Before the end of the month, the king was composed enough to write letters on state matters. It is a remarkable fact, that in none of his letters now extant does the king mention Gabrielle d'Estrées—not even in the familiar epistles which Henry was in the habit of writing to the constable. The cares of state, and the joyous hilarity which Rosny, Roquelaure, Bellegarde, and others took care to maintain round the king, soon exercised a healing influence over his inconstant spirit, now that the violence of his grief was spent; and congratulations poured in on the solution of the once difficult state problem of his marriage. The perpetual exhortations of his confessor Benoît, and of M. de Rosny, even made progress in the course of a few weeks in bringing the mind of Henry to the conclusion, "that the death of his once adored mistress was a merciful interposition of Providence

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., 1644.

in his behalf!" One day the king sat silent and mournful, unmoved by the witty sallies of his courtiers. The duke de Retz[1] approached, and boldly rallied the king on his melancholy; which, the duke said, surrounded as his majesty was at pleasure by the most lovely and fascinating women in the world, such as mademoiselle d'Entragues and others, was an ingratitude to Providence for so exalted a position; "and as for madame la Duchesse, sire, if you only reflect what you were about to do, you will allow that God has conferred a great blessing upon you by taking away the said lady!" The king smiled; a murmur of applause pervaded the circle, and the semblance of mourning for the duchess was from that day abandoned. As this bold inroad on what had been considered as Henry's sacred and cherished feeling was apparently acceptable, the example set by the duke de Retz was followed with alacrity by the courtiers. The charms of Henriette de Balzac were perpetually lauded by Roquelaure and Bellegarde, and complacently confirmed by the count d'Auvergne; who, however, also discreetly descanted on the reserve and virtue of his sister. These attributes were received with courtly incredulity by the cavaliers; who had not much faith in the reputed virtue of the daughter of Marie Touchet, and of François d'Entragues—one of the most profligate courtiers of the licentious *entourage* of Henri III.—confirmed, moreover, as they were in this opinion by the impression recently created

[1] Albert de Gondy, who was at this period smitten by the malady—a cancer in the mouth—which brought him to the grave at the commencement of the year 1602. He died in his hôtel, faubourg St. Honoré—"Chargé d'ans, de biens, et de douleurs."

by the artificial graces of the beautiful Henriette herself. "The knowledge of the favour and immense advantages secured to la Duchesse by his majesty tempted many young beauties of the court to vanquish, if so solicited, all virtuous resolves," says Cheverny. The king, however, listened without interest; being apparently alone occupied by cares of state.

Henry received, about the middle of May, the Spanish ambassador Don Juan de Taxis conde de Villamediana. The appointment of this intriguing individual, so notorious for his animosity during the wars of the League, was deemed by most persons as a defiance offered to the king by the youthful successor of Philip II. Henry, however, closed his ear to such insinuations, and gave Don Juan courteous welcome. His majesty was likewise visited by the patriarch of Constantinople Calatagirone, sent by his holiness to intercede for a longer extension of the period allotted for his mediation on the affair of Saluzzo. The cunning Franciscan plied Henry with numerous reasons why he should show forbearance; or even cease to contend for the restoration of so paltry a territory. Henry replied to these arguments *pieno de ripieghi*, by the unanswerable logic, "that he only asked for his own; and declined to cede or to exchange a territory disloyally captured, at a period when M. de Savoye knew that his predecessor king Henry III. could not avenge the wrong: moreover, to cede the marquisate would dishonour France in the opinion of the princes of Italy."[1] Clement VIII. heartily repented having

[1] The grand duke of Tuscany particularly urged the king to demand the restitution of Saluzzo, and even offered to advance a considerable sum of money (200,000 scudi) to enable his

undertaken to adjudicate upon claims maintained with such pertinacity. D'Ossat gives an amusing recital of the passion into which the obstinacy of the rival claimants threw the supreme pontiff; who, however, covertly favoured the cause of the duke de Savoy, as a sop to conciliate the Spaniards. The cardinal one morning humbly approached to condole with his holiness, who was going to preside at consistory with his arm in a sling, being afflicted with an attack of gout. "It is you, monseigneur, who do all you can to kill me, making me attend to business during these heats! I rested no more last night than a soul does in limbo!"[1] retorted the irate pontiff. D'Ossat replied, that his Christian majesty would be shocked indeed so to incommode and ruin the health of the Holy Father. "Yes! it is very fine talking—why is the time given to discuss this affair so short? If I do not pronounce your king will go to war, and the fault will be laid on my shoulders!" The affair of Saluzzo, after various discussions, was at length postponed, with the consent of the king, until the end of the year; as the duke of Savoy intimated to the French envoy his resolve to visit the court, and treat personally with his majesty.

After the ambassadors quitted Fontainebleau, the king one day on his return from the chase suddenly announced his intention to visit the Bois de Malesherbes — a château appertaining to the marquis

majesty speedily to undertake the campaign.—Galluzzi, Muratori, etc.

[1] "Il me repliqua—qu'il n'avoit reposé de toute la nuit precedente, non plus qu'une ame damnée: puis il ajouta, 'c'est vous autres qui me voulez tuer me faisant etudier avec ces grandes chaleurs.'"—Lettre 189.

d'Entragues. The courtiers applauded; and the king repaired thither, and was received by madame d'Entragues, and by her beautiful daughter.[1] The events of the ensuing year are painful to record; and damaging to the renown of Henri Quatre. They exhibit the great Henry cowering at the feet of an ambitious woman; false to his private and political engagements; and the credulous dupe of a family renowned for its scandalous intrigue. It needs all the inspiring memories of the heroism and generosity displayed on the fields of Coutras, Arques, and Ivry not to turn with sorrowful disgust from the contemplation of a character morally so weak and egotistical. The fidelity of history permits of no compromise with facts; and demands that the weaknesses of princes shall be traced with outlines as firm as their glorious exploits. Henry's noble qualities were called forth in times of peril—in days when an opportunity neglected might be a royal diadem forfeited. The Holy League, with its military campaigns, its political perfidies, and abject crimes, has at least the merit of having conferred the appellation of Le Grand on Henri IV. as its subjugator. The military successes and frank temper of king Henry have gained him a renown which the domestic annals of his life certainly do not sanction. The excesses of this reign exceed in enormity the wickedness of previous courts. Henry inaugurated that era of corrupt licence, which during the reigns of his grandson and great-grandson

[1] "Enfin madame d'Entragues (Marie Touchet) vint se tenir à Malesherbes, et chassant, dit au roy qu'il falloit que pour passer son ennui il s'allât divertir. Il y alla donc, et en fut fort amoureux (de la fille)."—Journal de ma Vie—Bassompierre, who was one of the cavaliers in the suite at this period.

undermined the glorious throne founded by his exploits.

The visit of king Henry to the Bois de Malesherbes occurred about the end of May, five weeks after the tragedy of the demise of Gabrielle d'Estrées. "The root of my love is withered" had been king Henry's pathetic wail to Madame. Henriette de Balzac stood before the king in the lustre of her artful yet piquant beauty, and the royal heart again throbbed with passion. For several successive days Henry made the château his resting-place after the fatigues of the chase.[1] "The vivacity and sprightly graces of mademoiselle d'Entragues raised in the breast of the king intense longing *de la voir, puis de la revoir, puis de l'aimer.*" Henry's domestic Mentor, Rosny, meantime, was cognizant of the new attraction inflaming the susceptible fancy of the king. Rosny, however, aware that some passion must occupy the mind of his master, deemed that *une illusion pasagère* for mademoiselle d'Entragues might monopolize the king, until after the election of a suitable consort; when a legitimate transfer of the royal homage would in all probability ensue. In this conclusion, however, the sage and prudent Rosny erred. He had formed a disparaging estimate of the intellect of mademoiselle d'Entragues. He judged her by the levity of her conduct when in public; and as Rosny depreciated generally the character of women—the late redoubtable queen-mother excepted—he viewed the fancy of the king with his usual dry indifference. The duchesse de

1 "Mademoiselle d'Entragues fit oublier au roy la Duchesse, bien qu'elle ne fut pas si belle, mais elle etoit plus jeune et beaucoup plus gaye."—Les Amours de Henri IV., Louise M. de Guise.

Beaufort seldom interfered in affairs of state; her inclination was for the pomps and gauds of royalty rather than for its solid attributes. A word from the king, a frown and a sarcasm from Rosny, sufficed to silence madame la Duchesse. Henriette de Balzac, however, had temper, wit, tact, and an overweening desire as well as a capacity for rule. Her *coquetterie* was incurable; by a thousand devices of toilette or manner, she had the art of displaying her charms under a new aspect[1]—one, always fresh and alluring. M. and madame d'Entragues, meanwhile, were as satisfied as the fair Henriette herself with the effect produced on the heart of the king. Gabrielle d'Estrées, had her life been spared, would have presided as queen over the summer festivities of the court. Mademoiselle d'Entragues was as well born, perhaps somewhat higher—she esteemed that her charms were equal to those of la Duchesse; while her wit and *savoir vivre* she rated greatly in excess. The Count d'Auvergne, however, pretended great resentment at the royal visits to Malesherbes, "unless his majesty intended eventually to espouse his sister." MM. d'Entragues and d'Auvergne resolved, therefore, to irritate the passion of the king, until they extorted from his majesty the celebration of a private betrothal, to be acknowledged on the dissolution of his marriage with Marguerite de Valois. Henry afforded every opportunity for these machinations; and actually took up his abode at Malesherbes from the 6th of June until the 9th, when his majesty left for Orléans, *en route* for Paris! The proceedings of

[1] "La demoiselle n'étoit pas novice," says Sully. "Elle était," writes another author, "emportée, peu delicate, coquette, et plus ambitieuse que tendre; mais charmant de visage et d'esprit."

their daughter were sharply watched by monsieur and madame d'Entragues. The marshal de Bassompierre asserts that the marquis d'Entragues was in earnest when he interdicted his daughter from responding to the royal suit, except on condition of the crown matrimonial. The prince de Joinville, Claude de Lorraine, had shown himself fascinated by the bewitching graces of Henriette; besides, it was prudently conjectured by the parents of the lady, that the admiration evinced by the king would subside on the arrival of the consort whom M. de Rosny was so anxious to elect. The king, nevertheless, during his sojourn at Malesherbes, made mademoiselle d'Entragues the offer of the place and state of the late madame la Duchesse. Rosny records, on the authority of the king, that the written answer of Henriette de Balzac was to this effect, "that she was so closely watched by her father and brother that it was impossible for her to yield to the impression made by the king; therefore, she must renounce a destiny unspeakably alluring. That she had already sounded her parents; but had ascertained that unless his majesty, in order to ease their consciences and to preserve their honour, would give her a written promise of marriage, nothing but immediate separation could ensue. That as far as she herself was concerned, the word of the king sufficed. In short, if his majesty really felt the attachment he professed, he would not hesitate to give this promise; which she knew could be regarded only as an idle form; but without the which, nevertheless, she must very reluctantly, but decidedly, decline his majesty's visits."[1] This reply was received by the king with

[1] The king's reply is as follows: "J'ai bien connu par votre lettre que vous n'aviez par les yeux bien ouverts ni les concep-

great indignation; especially as mademoiselle d'Entragues pretended to lament with tears, the cruel position in which she found herself placed by the vigilant rigour of her father and brother. These artifices ought to have opened the king's eyes; instead, his majesty arrived at Orléans more infatuated than ever; and irritated at the conduct of the count d'Auvergne, who conveyed his sister from Malesherbes to the strong castle of Marcoussy.[1] "We had nothing but journeys and expresses between Fontainebleau and Marcoussy, Malesherbes, Orléans, and Paris," writes the chancellor Cheverny, who met his majesty by appointment at Orléans. The king was not, however, inclined to transact business of state; his fancy now impelled him to visit Paris, where he made sojourn of a fortnight, "to visit the ladies of the court, and to superintend my buildings, without being troubled by business or ministers. My hosts are Zamet and Gondy, and I have never

tions aussi, car vous avez pris la mienne d'un autre biais que je ne l'entendois: il faut cesser ces brusquettes, si vous voulez l'entière possession de mon amour; car comme roy, et comme Gascon, je ne le sais pas endurer. Aussi ceux qui aiment parfaitement comme moi veulent être flattéz, non rudoyéz. Quand M. d'Entragues sera ici, je vous temoignerai si je vous aime ou non—mais il vous sied mal d'en douter—et cela m'offense."—MS. Béth., 9128. Bibl. Imp.

[1] The king writes angrily to Henriette de Balzac, "Comme je voulais monter ce matin à cheval votre père m'est venu supplier de ne vouloir point aller à Malesherbes, et que je ne vous trouverois pas; que je voulusse remettre le tout à Orléans, ou je sais qu'il ne vient pas. Cela ne m'ôte pas l'opinion qu'il ne veut qu'alonger. Comme j'ai été à cheval, il à dit tout haut. Par la mort D . . . il sera bien trompé, car il ne trouvera pas ma fille à Orléans! Ma femme y ira! Mais ma fille demeurera avec moi."—Lettre du roy à mademoiselle d'Antragues, MS. Béth. 9128.

slept twice under the same roof, and only returned here (Orléans) yesterday," writes his majesty to M. de Caumont. This letter was written on the 16th of July; on the 28th of the same month Henry dates a letter to the constable from Malesherbes. Mademoiselle d'Entragues had returned thither, on the absolute mandate of the king addressed to her father. After further consultation with her kindred, Henriette had written from Marcoussy to his majesty, demanding further guerdon in addition to a promise of marriage, as the price of her eventual compliance with his proposals; consisting of the sum of 200,000 crowns, part of which was to be employed in the purchase of a château and domain to serve as her abode, pending the realization of the king's matrimonial promise. M. d'Auvergne had suggested to Henriette, that to appear at court as the royal mistress might frustrate the design of her marriage. This request the king willingly granted; and applied to Rosny for the sum named, which first opened the eyes of the latter to the dangerous nature of the *liaison* he had encouraged. M. d'Entragues and the count d'Auvergne, moreover, made preposterous requests for military promotion; the which Henry granted—so great was his dread of encountering the frown of Henriette de Balzac.

On the 3rd of August Henry journeyed to Blois, to inspect a division of his army there assembled ready for a campaign in Savoye. The dubious conduct of the duke de Biron, and other notable personages of the court, who possessed influence in the county of the Blaisois, and the western provinces of the realm, was nevertheless the chief reason which induced the king to visit Blois. The vain and arrogant disposition of de Biron was a source of perpetual irritation to himself, and to his

friends. Biron never believed himself sufficiently recompensed, or treated with proper consideration. His susceptible vanity, therefore, was ever on the *qui vive:* and to bring himself prominently before the public, Biron scrupled not to involve himself in hostile agitation against his king and benefactor, rather than to subside into what he termed "inglorious obscurity." The marshal consequently adopted the *rôle* wisely abandoned by Epernon; and had commenced a correspondence with the duke of Savoye on the affairs of Saluzzo—this interference being totally unauthorized by the privy-council. Henry, therefore, summoned the duke from his château in Guyenne to join the court at Blois; especially as he was about to sign the edict re-establishing the Roman Catholic faith in Béarn and Lower Navarre[1]—a measure likely to excite cabals and factions, which the duke in his present disposition might foment. It was, however, alleged that the reason of the sojourn of the court at Blois was to promote the health of his majesty, who enjoyed the beautiful country, and the fine melons, for the growth of which the gardens of the castle were renowned. During the brief sojourn of Henry at Blois, the chancellor Cheverny died, after an illness of three days, at his adjacent castle of Chéverny.[2] His health had been for some months in a precarious condition. On his arrival at Cheverny—which castle he had never visited since the memorable day when Benoise, by command of Henry III., had demanded the great seal—an event followed by the temporary

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp.

[2] De Thou, liv. 123. "Cheverny était laborieux, judicieux, constant dans les afflictions, moderé dans les prosperités et facile à pardonner."—L'Etoile.

retirement of the chancellor—the chief personages of the neighbourhood waited to pay their respects. "Ah! messieurs," said the chancellor, with a sigh, "like a hare I have returned to my haunt—perhaps to die!" The words were prophetic: he was on the following day seized with inflammation of the stomach, a malady to which he had been subject, and died, greatly to the regret of his family and the court. Cheverny discharged his august functions as chancellor with ability and dignity. His demeanour was fascinating, and his generosity ample as his wealth. He was a true servant to Henri IV., whom he loved and revered; and whose government was strengthened by the tact and legal lore of Cheverny.[1] The *liaison* of the chancellor with madame de Sourdis, however, diminished the veneration before conceded to Cheverny—people lost faith in his equity when they witnessed the usurpations of that lady, who, until the king interfered, set no bounds to her rapacity.

On the 5th of August the king was again in Paris, feasting at the hotel of M. Zamet with mademoiselle d'Entragues and her kindred. The restlessness of the king at this period is demonstrated by his frequent changes of abode. His majesty oscillated between Paris, Fontainebleau, Malesherbes, St. Germain, and Blois; seldom making longer sojourns than four days at any place. The ambassadors

[1] During the last few weeks of his life, Cheverny refused to see madame de Sourdis, and expressed great remorse at the past scandal of his life. The chancellor's son and biographer, l'abbé de Pontlevoy, relates: "Mon père sachant que madame de Sourdis avertie de son mal allait le trouver, me commanda d'ecrire à la dite dame comme de moi, que ce n'étoit rien que l'indisposition ordinaire du dit sieur, et qu'elle ne se mit point en peine."—Relation de Philippe Hurault abbé de Pontlevoy, de St. Père et de Bonneval, evêque de Chartres. Cheverny died July 25, 1599.

and courtiers were wearied and annoyed with the costly "*courses de sa majesté*," as these journeyings were designated. Rosny, however, kept steadily to work, in which he was now admirably aided by the new chancellor, M. de Bellièvre, one of the most enlightened and astute of European statesmen. Those persons who rejoiced most at the demise of the duchess de Beaufort, were amazed at the apathy displayed by the king, who could bring himself, after incidents so ominous, again to hold festival under Zamet's roof; and there, in the presence of numerous guests, by his marked homage to Henriette de Balzac, to recall reminiscences of the unfortunate Gabrielle. Henry, it is recorded by a contemporary, and probably a spectator of the scene, flirted with mademoiselle d'Entragues, and publicly offered her a valuable pearl necklace. The accomplished coquette, too wily as yet to compromise her reputation, turned pettishly aside and refused the magnificent gift; fully expecting that the necklace would afterwards be sent to her abode. Henry, however, replaced the pearls in their casket, and gave them to a chamberlain to take back to the Louvre. The next morning mademoiselle d'Entragues received his majesty's felicitations; and instead of the necklace, which she expected, a present of a hundred fine apricots![1] Meantime 100,000 crowns had been wrung from M. de Rosny for the purchase of the château to be presented to mademoiselle d'Entragues by his majesty[2]—the remaining

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., 1644.

[2] "L'argent pour vous acheter une terre est tout prest; rien ne vous manque: je vous supplie à mains jointes, ma chere âme, que je n'ay plus affaire à votre père."—Lettre du roy à M. de Verneuil, MS. Bibl., 9128.

half of the sum stipulated, the lady had signified her desire to receive in specie. Henry had been compelled to command that this money should be placed at his disposal, to satisfy the cupidity of his future mistress and her family. "It was requisite for his majesty to employ the utmost constraint (*la dernière violence*) to wrest from me this sum," writes Rosny. The coldness occasioned by this altercation is apparent for some time in the letters written by Henry to his minister; in fact, the only redeeming point in the king's conduct at this season is, that he seems to have patiently endured the objurgations which he so richly merited. Henry purchased the small château and estate of Bois-Lancy, in the Orléannois, and sent the title-deeds to mademoiselle d'Entragues, with the request that she would now leave Malesherbes, and accept instalment therein at his hand; promising on his royal faith to give the promise demanded, so soon as a papal decree, by dissolving his marriage with queen Marguerite, might render such document valid. Henriette, however, demurely declined to leave her father's house, or to see his majesty again until after the divorce had been pronounced, and the promise duly delivered, "on the terms, however, which it may please your majesty to ordain."[1]

The suit for the royal divorce had already assumed

[1] In reply to this letter Henry writes, "Vous me commandez de surmonter si je vous aime toutes les difficultés que l'on pourra apporter à notre contentement. J'ai assez montré la force de mon amour, aux propositions que j'ai faite, pour que du coté des votres ils n'y apportent plus de difficulté. Ce que j'ai dit devant vous, je n'y manquerez point, mais rien de plus."—Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth., MS. 9128, fol. 15, also Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

a propitious aspect. The demise of the duchesse de Beaufort removed the grand obstacle present in the tender conscience of his holiness. The pontifical memory forthwith became refreshed; and numerous incidents and conversations with Charles IX. occurred to pope Clement, connected with his career of secretary of legation and auditor to the legate Alexandrini. His holiness stated his belief that the princess Marguerite never gave assent to the marriage; nor signed the petition to the Holy See for license to espouse Henri de Navarre, her kinsman in the third degree. Moreover, that the marriage was celebrated without the pontifical dispensation; and when that document was forwarded to Paris after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, that it was not communicated to the princess.[1] Queen Marguerite replied with eagerness to the solicitations of Rosny, that she would now in good faith promote the dissolution of her marriage. The queen stipulated that a suitable income should be settled on her; and her debts paid. She appointed M. Langlois as her proctor; and promised to sign any papers requisite for presentation to the pope in consistory. She authorized Langlois to assure his majesty "that her desire tended only to merit his approbation, and to promote the welfare of the realm." The queen, therefore, through her counsel and proctor, MM. Molé and Langlois, made petition to the king during the month of August, 1599, setting forth "that kinship, diversity of faith, and want of mutual consent, had rendered it inexpedient and impossible for marriage to subsist between

[1] "Sa Sainteté croyait fermement que la dispense n'avait jamais été lêue, ni expliquée à la dite Reine Marguerite; et qu'elle n'avoit point depuis la dite dispense prêté nouveau consentement."—Lettres d'Ossat, liv. 194.

Henry and herself; consequently, that never having been able in conscience to look upon his majesty as her lawful husband, she had for the last fifteen years abstained from inhabiting under the same roof. That now being past the age when she might give children to France, and observing the eager desire of the nation for an heir-apparent, she humbly solicited his majesty to permit her to make suit to the Holy See for the dissolution of the marriage."[1] This formality accomplished, the queen signed a petition to the pope, drawn by Langlois; in which her majesty, first alluding to the document she had already executed, praying for examination into the circumstances of her union with Henry IV., proceeds to state: "That in defiance of her will and desire, her brother, Charles IX., and her mother queen Catherine, had married her to the king of Navarre. That to this union she had given assent neither by word nor will: and that the king and herself being of kin in the third degree, she supplicated his holiness to pronounce the marriage null and void, giving power to each party to contract second nuptials."[2] The king likewise executed a similar document, which, with that of the queen, was forwarded to Rome. Armed with these important papers, the mission of the envoys was facilitated. D'Ossat curtly explained to Cardinal Aldobrandini the determination of the king to procure his divorce *par voye de l'Eglise, ou par voye de justice:* nevertheless, his eminence prayed that in the matter of the divorce "no favour might

[1] De Thou, liv. 123. Mém. de Sully, liv. 11ème. Piasocki—Chronique Polonais.

[2] Dreux de Radier—Vie de Marguerite de Valois. Bazin—Notice sur la Reine Marguerite. Mongez—Vie de Marguerite de Valois.

be shown to his royal master." Clement was further propitiated on being informed of the steps taken to re-establish the Romish faith in Béarn; and throughout those districts where it had been banished by the sectarian zeal of queen Jeanne d'Albret. In pursuance, therefore, of the advice of his ecclesiastical council, the pope nominated certain prelates to proceed to Paris, to investigate the matter, and take the depositions of the king and queen. The commissioners nominated by his holiness were le Père Ange,[1] upon whom the pope had conferred a cardinal's hat, the nuncio Gonzaga bishop of Modena, and Horatio del Monte archbishop of Arles. The commissioners were empowered to pronounce divorce, subject to the after-ratification of his holiness. The divorce, however, was universally regarded as accomplished from the moment that the prelates received their powers. They arrived in Paris at the beginning of the month of October, 1599, and commenced their sessions in the hôtel of the cardinal bishop of Paris, Gondy.[2] Marguerite was represented by her proctors, Molé and Langlois, to whom she committed full authority. The honour and repute of the queen were carefully guarded during the pleadings: no defamatory charges were preferred. Her conjugal conduct was holden to have been blameless; and the investigations of the commissioners were confined to the points whether the marriage was null by nearness of kin; and when accomplished, further invalidated by difference of faith, and default of the consent of the high contracting parties. Notwithstanding the consideration

[1] The Capuchin marshal duke de Joyeuse.

[2] De Thou, liv. 123. Journal de Henri IV., L'Etoile.—MS. Collection du President Bonhier, vol. 20. Dupleix.

evinced for her repute, Marguerite bitterly felt her degradation during the conference; and acknowledged that the act of resigning the crown of her ancestors and the alliance of a hero was not the indifferent event she had contemplated. The queen writes to Rosny, beseeching to be spared the ordeal of appearing before the commissioners; and requesting him to obtain his majesty's assent, so that her deposition and affidavit might be privately taken by Bertier, syndic of the Gallican Church, at the château d'Usson. "I avow to you," wrote the queen to M. de Mornay, "that I cannot support public disgrace and diminution of dignity. I protest that I agree to the divorce without regret, being aware that such will add to the comfort of the king, the welfare of this realm, and my own repose, liberty, and security; nevertheless, the dread lest those present should regard such consent as compulsory would be to me so notable a cause for confusion and chagrin, that I could not restrain my tears; which would have the effect of making these said cardinals believe that I am compelled so to agree, which will neutralize the desire of the king."[1] On the 10th of November, 1599, the papal delegates pronounced the dissolution of the marriage, on the ground of want of mutual consent; and because the high contracting persons were within the prohibited degrees of kinship; the which obstacle was not obviated at the period of the solemnization of the marriage by papal dispensation—the said decision to be deemed valid, and to take effect only after confirmation by his holiness.[2] The most intense joy was

[1] Lettre de la Reine Marguerite à M. Duplessis, ce 21 Octobre, 1599. Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois.

[2] Leonard—Recueil des Traitez de Paix, etc., t. 11. Moet-

demonstrated at this decree. The day on which sentence was pronounced Henry wrote to thank the members of the Sacred College and his Holiness. He then despatched the count de Beaumont Liancour to Usson, to convey the intelligence to queen Marguerite. The following is Henry's letter: —

Henry IV. to Queen Marguerite.[1]

"Ma Sœur—The delegates of our Holy Father sent to examine into the legitimacy of our marriage, have at length given sentence according to our earnest desire. I lose no time in sending this intelligence to you; while I renew the assurances of my friendship. I have sent the Sieur de Beaumont to fulfil this office, whom I have commanded to say to you on my behalf, that if God has permitted the bond which united us to be severed, His Divine justice has so ordained for our mutual comfort, and for the repose of this realm. It is my desire that you should feel convinced that it is not my intention to love and honour you less than I have ever done; on the contrary, I will take greater care of your interests; and will prove to you my intention to be a brother to you in effect as well as in name. I am gratified at the candour and frankness which you have demonstrated. I trust that God will bless the remainder of our days with fraternal friendship and national felicity. Console yourself, therefore, *ma sœur*, with this anticipation; and rely on my assurances that I will fulfil all that is in the power of

"Votre bon Frère,

"Henry."

jens—Recueil des Traitéz de Paix, Marriages, Contrats, etc., t. 2. All the documents concerning this divorce are to be found appended to Hist. du cardinal de Joyeuse.—Aubery, in 4to., 1654. MS. Bibl. Imp. Dupuy, 847, de Brienne, 138—Procès de Dissolution de marriage d'entre Henri IV. et la Reine Marguerite de Valois, in fol.

[1] Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois.—Bibl. Imp. F. Béth., 8955, fol. 46.

Henry's anxiety was great to inform the queen of the decision of the commissioners. The divorce, nevertheless, was not by any means positive in the irritable and uncertain condition of the papal mind. Clement distrusted the king; and desired a guarantee that the divorce once pronounced the king would espouse a consort descended from a catholic and orthodox race of princes; whose children, trained in reverent obedience to the successor of St. Peter, might restore in France the fallen *prestige* of the papacy. Queen Marguerite, in a very elaborate response, seems, therefore, not the least penetrated by the conviction that the crown matrimonial was irrevocably forfeited. The opening paragraph of the queen's letter is written with that irony in which Marguerite excelled. "Monseigneur," says she, "your majesty, imitating the gods, does not content yourself with showering benefits on your creatures, but deigns moreover to visit and console them in their afflictions."[1] The queen, however, signs herself "*votre sœur et subjecte.*" It was Marguerite's policy not to hold the decision of Joyeuse and his colleagues as final; the more so, as the edict confirmatory of the pecuniary advantages promised to the queen was yet unauthenticated by the royal sign-manual. The count de Beaumont, therefore, carried back to Paris a letter from the queen to the constable, requesting him forthwith to procure the ratification "of the promises made to you by the king on my behalf; for now is the appropriate time."[2]

The conflict in the mind of his holiness was great, when Henry's representatives, Sillery, d'Ossat, and the

[1] Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois. MS. F. de Béth., 9086, fol. 25.

[2] Ibid.—F. de Béth., 9086, fol. 25.

prelates sent into France, presented their sentence at the Vatican, and requested its ratification. Clement demanded time to offer special prayer to the Almighty; and plied the envoys with all manner of pertinent questions relative to the use their royal master was likely to make of his liberty. At length d'Ossat and Sillery, on the word and guarantee of Rosny and Villeroy, stated that the king had determined to demand the hand of the princess of Tuscany, Marie de Medici; and that Sillery held commission to repair to Florence, to make the preliminary inquiries, and private overtures to ascertain whether formal proposals from his majesty were likely to be accepted by the princess. When this statement was made, neither Rosny nor Villeroy was authorized by the king to tender such promise. Far from contemplating a union with Marie de Medici, Henry was absorbed by his passion for Henriette de Balzac. Villeroy and Rosny, however, afterwards excused their boldness; and declared themselves authorized by the words of the king, who had promised his parliament on its petition "that he would take immediate measures to give the realm a queen." When the pope heard that his majesty's intentions were so laudable, he ratified the decree of his commissioners; and pronounced matrimonial divorce between the Christian king Henry IV. and the most noble and serene princess Madame Marguerite de Valois, from one of the altars of St. Peters.[1] On the 22nd of December the decree was

[1] "Autoritate Apostolica vallati, asserimus, pronunciamus, et declaramus matrimonium alias anno Domini 1572, contractum ac etiam consummatum inter Henricum IV. Christ: Franc: et Nav: Regem, et serenissimam Reginam Margaretam e Francia, Valesiæ Ducem, nullum et invalidum, utpote non celebratum

registered by the parliament of Paris; and the pontifical bull publicly read from the altar of the church of St. Germain en Laye. On the 29th of December Henry issued his letters patent, decreeing that Marguerite should retain her royal titles of queen, and duchess de Valois. The counties of Agenois, Condomois, and Rouerge; the duchy of Valois; and the lordships of Verdun, Rieux, Rivière, and Albigeois, were settled upon the queen. The king paid her debts; granted her a residence in Paris; and assigned to Marguerite the château of Madrid in the Bois de Boulogne for life.[1] It was stipulated, however, that Marguerite should not yet avail herself of the privilege so dearly purchased of leaving her fortress palace of Usson. When the act was consummated which deprived her of the glorious crown of her ancestors, the unhappy Marguerite bitterly bewailed her abasement. She then addressed the following letter to Henry, which drew forth the ready tears of the king. "Ah! la malheureuse!" exclaimed he, "she accuses me of being the cause of her grief; but I take God to witness that she is herself the author of her dishonour—for her evil practices had separated us long ago!"

Queen Marguerite to Henry IV.

"Monseigneur—As we are bound to thank God for every blessing, as the Author of Good, I praise His name that, in the depth of my trouble and despair, He has given me the benediction of reconciliation with your

cum debetis S.R.E. solemnitatibus ac aliis necessariis de jure requisitis ad validitatem matrimonii."—Bull of Clement VIII. Leonard, t. 2. Moetjens, t. 2, 637. MSS. Dupuy, 347, Bibl. Imp.

[1] Hist. de Languedoc—Dom Vaissete, t. 3.—De Thou.

majesty, who thereby demonstrates royal clemency. The blow, sire, which has proceeded from you, though severely felt, at least gives me back tranquillity of mind, which I never could have regained while an alien, and banished from the honour of your good grace—the which, sire, I hoped for as long as hope could accompany desire; but which I no longer desired when you were pleased that I should live deprived of your favour. I have always considered the honour special, to conform in all things to your will, even to my own detriment; so that your noble spirit, sire, might yield without compunction to its impulses, even while mine suffered torment by obedience.

"If you, sire, have in times past been a consenting party to my afflictions, I hold such assent to have been caused by the force of events. You have now repaired the wrong once inflicted on my dignity by honouring me with your protection and friendship, to merit which I will devote the remnant of my life. It is true that my loss is so heavy and afflicting that I should deplore deeply my fallen fortune did I not reflect that such is your will; and that my damage may redound to the public weal. I have therefore submitted, sire, to obey you; and will praise God, who is your King, and thank you as my king, for the grace and content which I have received from your late royal and most fraternal favours. I pray the Divine Majesty to maintain your glory, and to inspire you with the will to show kindness to your very faithful and very affectionate sister, servant, and subject,

"MARGUERITE."[1]

This pathetic letter was read by the king, stained by his tears, and forgotten! Whilst his ministers were completing the necessary forms to annul his marriage, the king, as if he had no interest or concern in their labours, deliberately pledged himself, in the pursuit of his unbridled passion, to engagements

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr., 1644,

the most discreditable and degrading. The presence in France of the papal commissioners to pronounce on the validity of the royal marriage, sufficed to satisfy the pretended scruples of MM. d'Entragues. Mademoiselle d'Entragues, therefore, consented to smile propitiously upon the royal suit, provided that a promise of marriage, drawn with certain limitations to be specified by his majesty, and in which she agreed, was deposited in the hands of her father. One morning, therefore, the 31st of October, 1599, as the king was about to quit the palace of Fontainebleau to hunt, he called M. de Rosny, and taking him aside put into his hands a paper, which contained the promise exacted by mademoiselle d'Entragues. "It is a justice which I am compelled to render Henry," writes Rosny deprecatingly, "that he always avowed the aberrations into which his passions transported him; and consulted thereon those who he knew would most oppose his inclinations—a trait of rectitude and grandeur which few princes can claim." Henry, however, seemed to suppose that the royal mantle and the blind idolatry of Rosny gave him license to make confession of any weakness, however degrading. The king, in the paper which he placed with such *bonhomie*, as Rosny evidently thought, in the hands of his minister, promised and took oath, "before God, and on the honour of the king, to espouse Henriette Catherine de Balzac, in case the said lady gave birth to a son within one year from the date of the promise."[1] After perusing the

[1] "Cette pimbêche et rusée femelle sut bien cajoler le roi; le tourner de tant de côtés et gagner de telle sorte les porte-poulets et cajoleurs qui etoient tous les jours à ses oreilles!" says Sully, in the fervour of his indignation. Mademoiselle d'Entragues, however, had potent kindred. Her aunt, Catherine de Balzac,

document, Rosny remained mute with consternation and grief. The effect on the public when so shameful a document became divulged; and the ridicule likely to attach to the condition of the promise, reduced Rosny to despair. He likewise feared that, once aware of this promise, no importunity would induce the pope to proceed to the ratification of the divorce from Marguerite de Valois. He consequently returned the paper in silence. "Eh, M. de Rosny! speak your mind fearlessly—pray, do not play the discreet," exclaimed Henry, impatiently. Rosny asked the king to repeat this order. "Speak! I owe you reparation for the 200,000 crowns I have abstracted from you!" rejoined his majesty, facetiously—"say what you think!" Thus emboldened, Rosny took the paper, and tore it into fragments. "*Comment morbleu!* What are you doing? Are you mad?" "Sire! it is true I am a fool. Would to God that I was the only fool in France!" Rosny then remonstrated with the king—showing him, almost with tears, the madness and weakness of his conduct, and the fatal results likely to ensue. Henry listened with stolid patience; and when Rosny had finished his haraugue he left him without a word, and entering his closet, commanded M. de Lomenie, under-secretary of state, to bring him ink and paper. "The king quitted the gallery without uttering another word; and entering his closet, commanded Lomenie to give him an inkstand. He

espoused Esme Stuart baron d'Aubigny, brother to Matthew earl of Lennox. Esme was created a duke by James I. Catherine de Balzac bore her husband three children, the oldest of whom was the duke of Lennox, who played so conspicuous a part at the court of England after the accession of king James.

left the apartment in less than ten minutes, in which time his majesty had rewritten the promise. I stood at the foot of the staircase when his majesty descended; but he passed by, pretending not to see me. He then mounted his horse, and took the road to Malesherbes, where he spent the following two days," relates M. de Rosny.[1]

This famous promise, which afterwards gave rise to a formidable state conspiracy, is thus worded:—

"We, Henry the Fourth, by the Grace of God, King of France and Navarre, promise and swear before God, and on the faith and word of a king, to Messire François de Balzac, Seigneur d'Entragues, Knight of our Order, that he giving us for our companion and consort Mademoiselle Henriette Catherine de Balzac, his daughter, that in case six months hence the said lady becomes pregnant, and eventually gives birth to a son, from that instant we will take her for our wife and legitimate spouse; and will publicly celebrate such marriage in the face of Holy Church, with the accustomed solemnities. We also promise and swear to ratify this promise again, under our sign-manual, so soon as our Holy Father the Pope decrees the dissolution of the marriage contracted between us and Madame Marguerite de France, with permission to enter into fresh nuptial contract. In witness thereof we write and sign the present—Au Bois de Malesherbes, this 1st day of October, 1599.

"Henry."[2]

[1] Livre, 11ème. Economies Royales, t. 1, in fol. Amsterdam. The king was received at Malesherbes by madame d'Entragues, who connived throughout in Henry's pursuit of her daughter. M. d'Entragues was absent from home—a circumstance of which he made the most in the trial which subsequently ensued.

[2] Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. MS. 177; also Lettres Missives de Henri IV.

The secret of this promise was rigidly kept. It was confided by Rosny to two persons only—to Villeroy and to Montmorency. These noblemen determined, nevertheless, to commence negotiations for the alliance of their royal master with Marie de Medici; and to intimate, at any risk, such design to pope Clement. They trusted some fortunate accident might frustrate the accomplishment of a promise so ruinous; but which it was then some consolation to think was only conditional. In the case of king Henry repentance followed vivid even as Rosny could desire: nevertheless, the conspiracies and broils which subsequently ensued from that deed of egregious folly were fatal to the political prosperity and domestic peace of Henri Quatre.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

1599—1600.

Affairs concerning the marquisate of Saluzzo—The duke of Savoy visits the court of France—His objects—The duke de Biron—His disaffection and intrigues—Arrival of M. de Savoye at Fontainebleau—Details—His relations with M. de Biron and other malcontents—Conferences on the restitution of the marquisate of Saluzzo—Deportment of the duke of Savoy—Negotiations for the marriage of Henri Quatre—Marie de Medici, and the grand ducal family of Tuscany—Numerous suitors for the hand of the princess—Donna Eléanore Dori—Giovannini, envoy from the grand duke Ferdinand, arrives in Paris—Discussions relative to the dowry of madame Marie—Mademoiselle d'Entragues—Fears inspired by her insolence and presumption—Attitude of her kindred—King Henry grants audience to the Tuscan envoy at Conflans, and authorizes a demand in form for the hand of Marie de Medici—Continuation of the conferences with the duke of Savoy—His departure from Paris, and perfidious intents—The Condé de Fuentes—M. de Rosny created grand-master of artillery—Domestic feuds of the duke and duchess de Bar—Disquietude of Madame—The duke de Bar visits Rome—His errand, and its success—Marriage contract

of king Henry—Entry of the French ambassadors into Florence by torchlight—Proclamation of the marriage—Deportment of the princess—First letter written by Henri IV. to his affianced consort—The reply of madame Marie—Imperious temper of the princess—She emancipates herself from the guidance of her kindred of Medici—Demands the appointment of Eleanore Dori in her household—Opinions of the potentates of Europe on the marriage between king Henry and Marie de Medici—Conference of Fontainebleau—Its religious import—Correspondence of the king with the duke d'Epernon, and of M. de Mornay with the duchesse de Bar—Henry bestows the castle and marquisate of Verneuil on mademoiselle d'Entragues — Departs for Lyons to superintend the warlike preparations for the invasion of the duchy of Savoy.

THE discussions relative to the Marquisate of Saluzzo continued, and formed the under-current of all Henry's negotiations. The king never demonstrated more determined spirit on any political incident throughout his reign. In defiance of the intercessions of Rome, and of the expostulations of the duke of Savoy, the menaces of Spain, and the indifference of his cabinet, the members of which deprecated war, in order to re-annex so insignificant a territory—to all these objectors Henry had but one reply—*Je veux mon Marquisat.*[1] The circumstances under which Saluzzo was captured, and the disingenuous conduct of the duke of Savoy, who at times arrogantly maintained his right to the territory, and at others humbly implored his majesty to grant its investiture to one of his sons—were facts not likely to conciliate a monarch of Henry's temper. The inconsistencies of the duke deprived him at this period of the mediation of the pope. Clement one day remarking on the strange vacilla-

[1] Mém. de Sully, t. 2ème. De Thou, liv. 123.

tions of the duke—who, his holiness said, proposed articles and cancelled them before their purport could be discussed—M d'Alconat insolently retorted, "that his holiness, therefore, had better decree possession of the province to duke Charles, for his master was willing to bestow its investiture on Aldobrandini, one of the pope's cherished nephews!" "Inform your master," promptly replied the pope, "that such a design never occurred to me. As you, M. l'ambassadeur, have been culpable enough to propose a transaction of this nature, I decline to act either in the capacity of umpire or mediator between his Christian majesty and your master."[1] Clement acted on this declaration; and although he still covertly favoured the projects of duke Charles, in deference to the views of Philip III., his legates received instructions to abstain from mediating between the belligerents. In Germany the duke of Savoy excused his conduct on the extraordinary plea, "that being a tender father, and having several sons, it was his duty to provide these children with appanages,"—a declaration which incensed the king more than any previous excuse. The demise of Philip II., meantime, and the uncertainty of the policy about to be adopted by the Spanish cabinet, under the marquis de Denia,[2] who showed great jealousy of the duke's favourite ally, the conde de Fuentes, viceroy of Milan, compelled the former to proceed with caution. The duke thereupon had commenced a correspondence with the duchesse de Beaufort; and offered the investiture of Saluzzo for her son Alexander, provided that she obtained from the king his renunciation of suzerainty over the

[1] Cayet—Chron. Septennaire.

[2] Afterwards duque de Lerma.

marquisate. Gabrielle d'Estrées received this overture with favour; but her death intervened just as the duke's ambassadors had solicited passports to enable their master to visit the French court. The subsequent failure of the negotiation undertaken by Calatagirone, and the demise of the duke's consort, Doña Catalina, sister of the Infanta, and of Philip III., which event was deemed likely to render the cabinet of Madrid indifferent to the cause of Savoy, made the duke's journey to confer with the king still more expedient. Mademoiselle d'Entragues was in the ascendant; but her position was then insecure, and her reign menaced by the active negotiations of Rosny at the court of Florence. It was, therefore, thought possible that the new mistress would suffer herself to be bribed by the homage of so high a personage; and by the rich gifts once destined for her predecessor. Moreover, M. de Savoye hoped to profit by the divisions and intrigues of the malcontents of the court.[1] The disaffection of Biron was an event to be improved; the discontent of the dukes de Bouillon and de la Trimouille afforded opening for a subtle process of political guile. The relations of the marshal de Biron with the Spanish ministry at this period, though unknown to the king, menaced the monarchy so bravely reorganized by the genius of Henri Quatre. Biron never forgot that he had been despoiled of the office of admiral to gratify M.

[1] "Je ne passe pas en France, pour en emporter quoique ce soit, mais pour y laisser un souvenir ineffaçable de ma presence. On ne pourait jamais effacer qu'avec une epée les traces profondes que je laisserai dans ce Royaume!"—De Thou. Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoye. Tortora—Hist. de Francia, 3 vols. in 4to. Venetia.

de Villars;[1] though subsequently ample *amende* had been made him in the shape of a marshal's baton, and by a patent of *haute-noblesse*. His intrigues with the court of Spain are supposed to have commenced during his sojourn in Brussels, whither he had been sent as ambassador extraordinary to witness the confirmation of the peace of Vervins by the archduke viceroy. At Brussels, Biron was visited by the famous leaguer Louis Picotté, dit d'Orléans—the agitator whose political pamphlet being patronized by Rose bishop of Senlis, had occasioned the prosecution and punishment of that turbulent priest. This Picotté hazarded some remarks on the re-organization of the league in France: he stated that the government of Philip III. was willing to give such movement material assistance; adding, that to see so great a captain as Biron superseded by less worthy personages in the regard of the king, was deemed by king Philip scandalous ingratitude. The marshal, instead of resenting such unfounded and impertinent comments, made some bombastic reply,[2] encouraging enough, however, to authorize Picotté to venture upon further communications after the return of the duke to France. His intercourse was zealously renewed after the registration of the edict of Nantes: a measure the more acrimoniously resented by Biron, inasmuch as the Constable had been chosen by Henry to enforce his mandate on the reluctant parliament. Biron, therefore, through this renegade leaguer, had

[1] "History of the Reign of Henry IV. King of France and Navarre," bk. 3, Part 1st.

[2] "Le maréchal luy respondit que s'il venoit en France, il serait bien ayse qu'il luy en parlast plus clairement."—Vie et Mort du maréchal de Biron—Paris, 1605.

been imprudent enough to make a communication to the Spanish cabinet, "praying his Catholic majesty to favour the maintenance of the true faith in France, the which was endangered by the heresy of the king, who in his heart was still a Calvinist: that he knew it was the intention of the king to take respite from war for the space of three years; when with renewed military vigour and pecuniary solvency, it was his majesty's intention to attack the Spanish monarchy in the Low Countries, Italy, and in Spain itself; and that it was for the interest of the faith, as well as for that of the crown of Spain, that his Catholic majesty should be forewarned."[1] The intrigue had advanced thus far, when one Lafin was introduced as negotiator between Biron and the Spanish viceroy over Milan, then Velasco—but ultimately the condé de Fuentes, the most able foe against whom Henri Quatre had to contend. Fuentes hated France and the king with an intensity which partook of insanity.[2] His agent was worthy of the masters whom he served. Lafin was a gentleman of Burgundy, brother of M. Beauvoir la Nocle, and distantly related to the house of Gontaut. He was plausible, keen, treacherous, and ready to barter honour for pelf. His love of gain was intense; and a failing or a doubtful cause Lafin was the first to forsake if not to overthrow. The temperament and principles of this individual

[1] Déposition de Jacques Lafin—Procés criminal du maréchal de Biron.

[2] When the condé de Fuentes heard the disastrous tidings of the assassination of Henry IV. his joy burst forth with indecent elation. "El condé," says his confessor, "fu ton alegre, como impensada nuova de tal suerte occupò su cabeza, que pareciò inchirle el lugar del seso y dejarle sin el, loco de plazer."

rendered him peculiarly adapted to humour and to guide a character like that of Biron—proud, chivalrous, and passionate to frenzy. Lafin was apt at guileful excuse; and could assuage, and restore the marshal to his usual self-complacency after a mad outburst of rage. The duke of Savoy was initiated in the secret of this intrigue by Fuentes. As the temper of the duke was one essentially perfidious and *brouillon*, he eagerly responded; and instructed his ambassadors, the chevalier le Breton and M. de Roncas to ask for a safe conduct from the king—resolved to secure the cession of Saluzzo; or to gain an equivalent by fomenting the restless and seditious cabals of the chief barons of Henri Quatre.

The duke of Savoy accordingly quitted Turin about the middle of November, 1599. His application had been received by the king with courteous amity. The envoys of the duke announced that the object of their master's journey was to content his majesty by the cession of the marquisate, if no compromise could be effected. Again Henry repeated, "M. de Roncas, your master will be welcome; but, *je veux mon marquisat!*" The duke of Savoy was attended by a suite of fourteen persons. He travelled post, sometimes attended by his gentlemen, and at others leagues in advance. The duke occasionally rose in the night and pursued his journey, as fancy dictated. The habits of his highness were so eccentric and irregular that etiquette was virtually proscribed at the court of Turin. At the frontier duke Charles was received by M. de Guiche, governor of the Lyonnais, and conducted to Lyons. In this city he met with his first rebuff. His father, the late duke of Savoy, in virtue of his title of count de Villars and lord of Monluel, was a canon of the

illustrious chapter of St. Jean de Lyons. The duke, therefore, on his arrival in Lyons, sent a request, somewhat arrogantly worded, that his own election to similar honour might be proceeded with. The chapter, in anticipation of such demand, had communicated with the government. The king authorized his faithful counts de St. Jean to refuse this honour to a foreign prince who had systematically proved himself the enemy of France; the more especially as Monluel, the chief town of the marquisate of Villars, was garrisoned by French troops.[1] The duke angrily resented this decision: he refused to attend mass in the cathedral, and left Lyons suddenly for Rouenne, from whence he took boat down the Loire to Orléans. Henry, meantime, waited the presence of his guest at Fontainebleau, attended by a court numbering upwards of four hundred cavaliers. His majesty despatched MM. de Montpensier and de Nemours, and the marshal de Biron, to salute the duke at Orléans, and to escort him to Fontainebleau. Early on the following morning, as the king was quitting the chapel after matins, intending to greet his guest on the borders of the forest, the duke suddenly arrived. Whilst his attendants slept, including Montpensier and Biron, he stole a march and performed the journey to Fontainebleau, attended by Nemours and by one equerry. The king and his eccentric guest cordially embraced, and after some parley proceeded to view the gardens and royal hunting establishments. Six subsequent

[1] De Thou, liv. 123. Journal de Henri IV. Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoye. "Le duc portait le deuil pour la mort de la duchesse sa femme,"—Doña Catalina, youngest daughter of Philip II. and Elizabeth de Valois.

days were spent in entertainments and fêtes of gorgeous description. Mademoiselle d'Entragues appeared at the festivities; and hunted in the forest, attired as the goddess Diana. Rosny and his consort occupied their pavilion of the château. Sickness or death, however, had deprived the royal circle of many of its brightest ornaments. The duchess de Nevers, whose gaiety and grace imparted spirit to the revels of the court, was drooping under the ravages of dropsy. The dowager princess de Condé was ill and absent. The brightest star of the court, Gabrielle d'Estrées, had perished by a painful and mysterious death. The duchess de Bouillon Elizabeth de Nassau, lived a life of seclusion at her château of Sedan; being too proud and too bigoted to yield precedence, or to consort with ladies professing a different faith, or who claimed higher court privileges than the patent of Bouillon sanctioned. The Constable had lost his beautiful wife; and was at this period absorbed by his negotiation with the Holy See to obtain dispensation to espouse mademoiselle de Clermont, the youthful aunt of the deceased madame de Montmorency. The duke de Savoy, meantime, made several attempts to confer *tête-à-tête* with the king on the subject of the marquisate. Henry steadily declined a political discussion; and invited the duke to wait until the matter might be debated in the council-chamber of the Louvre. The duke, however, confidently alluded to Saluzzo, "as if he were still in the citadel of Turin; and protested that nothing should induce him to cede an ancient territory of his house, usurped in 1490 by the king of France." Nevertheless, to M. des Allymes, one of his principal counsellors, M. de Savoye exclaimed—"I have accomplished my errand: the king is, I per-

ceive, inexorable; I return as I came!" On the 19th of December Henry and his royal guest repaired to Paris. New Year's Day was ushered in by the exchange of magnificent gifts. Henry presented the duke with a badge of diamonds; beneath the centre jewel was a miniature of the king. M. de Savoye sent to the Louvre, as an offering to his majesty, two vases and two bowls of rock crystal. To Henriette de Balzac the duke presented a casket of jewels; also fans and gloves.[1] The liberalities of his highness were not confined to the king and his mistress. He offered two horses, superbly accoutred, to M. de Biron, who refused the gift — a churlishness which excited more speculation than if the marshal had accepted the donation.[2] To M. de Rosny, whom the duke anxiously desired to conciliate before the pending discussion, he despatched M. des Allymes with a costly snuff-box, ornamented with the cipher of Rosny in diamonds. While the latter was admiring the workmanship of the box, the ambassador awkwardly made allusion to the claim of his master on Saluzzo. The astute Rosny therefore divined the meaning of the valuable gift which he held. Inside the box was a miniature of the duke. Rosny, therefore, requesting permission to retain the portrait, returned the box, saying, that on his assumption of office he had made oath to accept gifts alone from the gracious hand of his sovereign. Des Allymes replied, "that he had no power to divide the benefactions of his master;" and as he intimated that Rosny might not retain the picture without the box, the latter declined the gift, much to the annoyance of the duke.[3]

[1] Journal de Henri IV. Chron. Septennaire.

[2] Aubigné—Hist. Universelle. Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 2.

[3] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11ème.

M. de Savoye nevertheless sagely dissembled his discontent, and waited with impatience for the promised debate on his pretensions relative to Saluzzo. On his arrival in Paris his highness declined the apartment prepared for him in the Louvre, under pretext that he found the etiquette of the court insufferable; and took up his abode at the hôtel de Nemours. Henry accompanied his restless guest to La Chambre Dorée, where a celebrated criminal cause was tried, and sentence pronounced in the royal presence. Another day Henry mustered his valiant body-guard in the court-yard of the Louvre, and put the corps through its evolutions. His majesty then condescended to ask the opinion of his guest on the discipline of the men. "Oh!" responded the duke, carelessly, "the men seem able and brave fellows!" "You should see them in the field, mon frère, they there show the courage of lions. I pay each of them four crowns the month!" "Majesté! that is too little! permit me now to present each man with the gratuity of one month's pay!" "You can please yourself, monseigneur," replied the king; "nevertheless, any man who receives a *sou* from the hand of your highness shall be hanged forthwith in our presence!"[1] The frankness of Henry's character constantly evoked the sneers of his guest, who often amused himself at this dangerous game without heed for the consequences. The marshal de Biron and the duke de Savoye, meantime, continued their *liaison*. Lafin, who now filled the office of secretary to Biron, was also admitted to confidential intercourse;[2] and affected

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

[2] "Le seigneur Jacob, introduisit dans le cabinet du duc de Savoye à l'hôtel de Nemours le sieur Lafin. M. de Villeroy

to be penetrated by the condescension of the duke. Biron still retained sufficient fear and veneration for his august master at this period, to compel the plotters to hide the malignity of their designs, and not rudely to challenge his allegiance. The plan adopted was the following: the duke of Savoy repeated his private discourse with his majesty to Lafin, which he took care to render not very complimentary to Biron, under strict injunctions that no part was to be divulged to the marshal. Lafin, nevertheless, under pretext of extreme zeal and attachment for his patron, never failed to repeat all that he had thus heard. When the fiery temperament of Biron was lashed into fury by the depreciating observations often falsely ascribed to the king, Lafin, with affected sympathy, soothed the marshal's irritation; while treasuring every word uttered by the latter to report to the duke of Savoy, who in his turn made communication to the conde de Fuentes. For instance, Lafin told his credulous dupe one day that the king, in conversing with the duke, said, "Biron is a boaster. His gallantry is conceit: he has no aptitude: intrust an affair to M. de Biron, and it is sure to fail! The marshal de Laverdin, on the contrary, is a man and a soldier to be esteemed and trusted!" Another time the duke said that he asked the king whether his majesty would object to the union of his natural daughter, Donna Matilda, with the duke de Biron? Henry replied, "That in the kingdom there were fifty families more worthy of such honour than that of Gontaut Biron. That Biron was too old, too poor,

allant voir le comte d'Auvergne (chez Biron) trouva La Fin; or, on ne pensoit pas que Lafin fust en cour."—Chron. Sep. De Thou, L'Estoile, Guichenon.

and too versatile to receive so signal an honour."[1] "Monseigneur le duc," continued the traitor Lafin, who, it is recorded, always prefaced his subtle perfidies by embracing his master on the left eye, "does not deem you so unworthy: the duke desires to have you for his son-in-law; and moreover, has authorized me to sound your sentiments, monseigneur, which he trusts may meet his own." Biron, on hearing this mendacious recital, fell into one of his accustomed fits of rage: his vanity being wounded, prudence, principle, and loyalty no longer asserted empire. Lafin continued his pretended revelations; he said that the duke of Savoy had discovered "that the king alone trusted Rosny; and moreover confessed that his generals had been rather a hindrance to his recognition by the people: that their dissensions had ruined his affairs, alienated the princes, and disgusted his allies, especially MM. de Biron, father and son, whose intractability had created an adverse impression never to be effaced from his royal mind." The marshal during this discourse walked about his apartment chafing with passion. "If I had been present at such discourse, every person in the company, I swear, would I have left bathed in his blood!" exclaimed he.[2] On the subject of his marriage Biron was peculiarly sensitive, believing himself injured by the king in this matter. Every favour conferred by Henry on other of his servants, Biron took as an affront to himself. His majesty had bestowed the heiress of Bouillon on Turenne; the heiress of Joyeuse on Montpensier; and the hand of madame Catherine on the duke de Bar. When, therefore, the agents of the king of Spain and

[1] De Thou, liv. 128.
[2] Ibid., liv. 123.

the duke of Savoy proposed three august alliances, one of which they undertook to complete as a preliminary of the treachery to be consummated in France through the guilty agency of Biron, the marshal's vanity was solaced in its tenderest point. His illegitimate daughter the duke of Savoy promised richly to endow; but as a further provocative to the insensate ambition of Biron, two other brides were mentioned—Marguerite de Savoye,[1] the duke's eldest legitimate daughter and niece of his catholic majesty; and the archduchess Marie, sister of the queen of Spain, whose marriage of three months with Bathory, prince of Transylvania, had just been dissolved by papal mandate. Biron seems so far fallen from his allegiance at this period as to have authorized Lafin to assure the duke of Savoy that he would support his interests in the affair of Saluzzo; and consider on the propositions made by his highness, and by the condé de Fuentes on behalf of Spain.[2]

Commissioners were at length appointed to adjudicate on the affairs of Saluzzo. The deputies appointed by the king were Biron, Rosny, and the secretaries Maisse and Villeroy: the commissioners of M. de Savoye were M. de Belli, his chancellor, the count de Moretta, M. de Jacob, and the chevaliers de Breton and des Allymes. Every artifice had been employed to gain the ear of Rosny. Schemes of conquests were propounded by des Allymes, in

[1] This princess espoused the duke of Mantua; eventually the duke's second daughter was offered to Biron, with a dowry of 500,000 gold crowns.—Vie et Mort du maréchal de Biron.

[2] M. le maréchal fit dire au duc qu'il donnerait tant d'affaires au roy dens le royaume qu'il ne songerait pas au marquisat.—Vie et Mort du maréchal de Biron—Imprimée à Paris, 1605.

which the king was to invade Lombardy, and, aided by the military resources of the duke, drive the Spaniards and Imperialists from Italy. Extension of Italian territory was then to be given to the duke of Savoy; to be followed by the assumption by the latter of the title of king of the Alps, and by the eventual cession of Savoy, Bresse, and Bugey to France. The king, however, suffered himself not to be dazzled by projects which he foresaw were then impracticable; but continued steadily to demand his marquisate. The conferences were holden in the hôtel de Montmorency. Calatagirone presided as representative of the pope, and as general mediator. Before the *séance* commenced, the nuncio bishop of Modena waited on his majesty and requested him to withdraw his protection from the heretic town of Geneva. This proposal was slyly suggested by M. de Savoye, who hoped, on the refusal of the king, to break up the conference; as he believed that the agents of his holiness would decline to take part in the political negotiations of a prince of faith so lukewarm. An indignant and decisive negative was at once given by Henry to the demand of the nuncio. His majesty replied, "that he would not forsake the policy of his predecessors, who had always constituted themselves protectors of the town of Geneva: moreover, the abandonment of Geneva would be injurious to France, by closing the Pas de Cluses—a pass by the which Swiss levies entered the realm." [1] The conference, nevertheless, was opened by the king; who then quitted the chamber for his tennis-court, leaving the ministers of France and Savoy in debate. Henry loitered a few minutes in an adjacent gallery, to

[1] De Thou, liv. 123.

speak with one M. de Bellengreville, when, to his surprise, he beheld Rosny issue from the council-chamber.

Henry asked if the conference was over, and why Rosny quitted his colleagues? M. de Rosny replied, that, as soon as his majesty left the chamber, the commissioners, instead of taking their places at the table, divided into groups of three or four persons, and began to converse apart. Bellièvre, after some demur, at length approached him and intimated, "that Calatagirone could not sufficiently overcome his antipathy to a Huguenot to debate on political matters with the requisite *sang-froid* in the presence of M. de Rosny." The commissioners, therefore, prayed the latter to retire, or the *séance* would be without result. Rosny uttered not a word; but making profound obeisance, quitted the chamber and sought the king. "This is again a subterfuge of M. de Savoye to deceive me!" exclaimed Henry. "There shall be no discussion without your presence!" Henry then commanded Rosny to return and inform the commissioners, "that if any person objected to his presence, it was for such individual to retire."[1] Calatagirone thereupon announced the adjournment of the debate until he had spoken with the king. Henry, when appealed to, positively refused to sanction the intolerant demand of the new patriarch of Constantinople; who thus sought to signalize his zeal, and to abet the designs of Savoy and the popedom. His holiness, though his professions to the cardinals Joyeuse and d'Ossat were fair enough, manifested grudging dissatisfaction at the policy of the king. Clement, though he had not deemed himself at liberty to refuse ratifica-

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11ème.

tion to the divorce pronounced during the month of November by his commissioners, after being assured that Henry meditated alliance with the catholic house of Medici, yet the aggrandizement of the grand ducal family gave him intense chagrin. Consequently his holiness summoned Joyeuse to a secret conference, and had demanded the private opinion of the cardinal-duke on the chance of success, if he offered to the king the hand of his great-niece Donna Olympia Aldobrandini, sister of the duchess of Parma, with a million of scudi for her dowry.[1] Joyeuse replied, that he believed the king had resolved to demand the hand of Marie de Medici, incited thereto by the European repute of her uncle the grand-duke; and by gratitude for the loans always forthcoming from the Florentine treasury during the period of his majesty's greatest need. This opinion being confirmed by the arrival of M. d'Alincour son of Villeroy, who bore the royal warrant to visit Florence, the pope reluctantly renounced his design; though this disappointment, and the dread lest the king of France should conclude alliance offensive and defensive with the Venetian republic and the Medici to check the sway of Spain in Italy, induced his holiness through his envoys to support the chimerical claims of the duke of Savoy. The debate on the affairs of Saluzzo was resumed. The duke resorted to every device to evade the surrender of this much-prized territory. He offered to hold the marquisate under the crown of France; and even to acknowledge the same tenure as regarded the county of Bresse. He proposed that Saluzzo should be settled on his second son; and offered to abandon his Spanish alliance,

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

and to aid the king with the resources of his duchy for the re-conquest of the Milanese. When the duke found that his artifices[1] failed to move the resolve of the king and his ministers, he was assailed by sudden panic lest Henry should detain him in captivity until he signed the renunciation demanded. With great secrecy, therefore, he commenced preparations for flight, confiding his intentions to Biron and to certain members of the marshal's *coterie*. The intentions of M. de Savoye, nevertheless, were penetrated by Rosny, who vigilantly watched the proceedings of his master's eccentric and impulsive guest. Henry accordingly caused the following message to be transmitted to the duke through M. des Allymes—"That his majesty had received pleasure by the visit of his highness, because the king hoped that the vexed question of the marquisate might be settled. His majesty was, moreover, mortified that the duke continued to refuse restitution or equitable compensation. Nevertheless, the duke was free to quit France if such should be his pleasure, and leave the question to be decided by arms. That the king was willing to accept the cession of the county of Bresse, the vicariat of Barcelonetta, and the vales of Perosa, Stura, with Pignerol and its district, in exchange for Saluzzo: and moreover, consented to allow M. de Savoye the term of three months to decide."[2] This intimation relieved the fears of the duke; and he expressed a desire that the con-

[1] De Thou, liv. 123. Sully, liv. 11ème. Mathieu—Hist. de Henri IV. "Les deputés du Roy reponderent que sa majesté ne voulait point d'echange, mais une restitution pure et simple du marquisat."—Journal de Henri IV.

[2] Ibid.—Chron. Septennaire.

ference should be resumed. Henry offered no objection; being then unsuspicious of the bad faith and underhand dealings of M. de Savoye, who desired alone to prolong his residence at the French court, the more perfectly to mature his intrigues to compass a renewal of the civil war.

The negotiation connected with the remarriage of the king, meantime, gave employment of the most anxious and intricate nature to Rosny and Villeroy, the ministers most in the royal confidence. Mademoiselle d'Entragues was *enceinte* and publicly paraded her shame and pretensions. The promise of marriage which the king in a moment of delusion had given, was carefully treasured by M. d'Entragues; who met the allusions of the king, and his jocular demands for the restitution of this paper, with obsequious, though utter disregard. The empire of Henriette de Balzac now seemed as permanent as was that of madame la Duchesse. The king patiently endured the extraordinary caprices and jealousies of his mistress. The more virtuous of the courtiers deplored the degradation of their hero—the great captain, whose fame overtowered that of Parma and Fuentes, permitted himself to be treated in public with insolent disdain or familiarity by the daughter of Marie Touchet! Mademoiselle d'Entragues had an unbridled and virulent tongue;[1] and was totally devoid of discretion—a trait conspicuous in the character of Gabrielle d'Estrées. The children of the latter Henriette could never tolerate; for her jealous fury was even roused

[1] Mademoiselle d'Entragues on one occasion commanded the king to leave her presence, and to quit the saloon; an order obeyed by his majesty, who went his way speculating what would be the conduct of Henriette as queen, when her demeanour was so arrogant as his mistress!

by the retrospect of his majesty's career. So dangerous were her wiles, and determination, that Rosny perceived no time was to be lost in affiancing the king to a princess worthy to share his throne. The negotiation with the grand-duke, therefore, was eagerly entered upon by Rosny; because the king expressed himself obliged to duke Ferdinand, and not averse to a nearer alliance with Tuscany—though Henry could never be persuaded to express his opinion on the merits of the princess Marie. The project of this marriage had been conceived so far back as during the visit of Cardinal de Gondy to Florence in 1592, on his mission of conciliation to Rome. The grand-duke had then generously promised the king a succour of one million scudi; while Gondy undertook, in case the nuptial contract between the king and Marguerite de Valois was dissolved, that the claim of Marie de Medici to the honour of the king's alliance should receive the first consideration of the cabinet of the Louvre.[1] The infatuation shown by the king for the duchesse de Beaufort, added to the disinclination evinced by the supreme pontiff to dissolve Henry's marriage, caused the project to be abandoned. Various negotiations subsequently ensued for the betrothal of Marie, who was the only marriageable princess of the house of Medici. The most singular failure attended these overtures; which were all made in good faith, and with the fullest purpose to obtain the hand of a princess so comely and well-dowered. In 1590, the grand-duke proposed to give his niece to the duke de Montpensier: but

1 "Il gran Duca promettendo il soccorso di un millione d'oro, ricevé dal cardinale Gondi la promessa, que il re sciogliendo il suo matrimonio avrebbe sposato la principessa Maria, di cui si mando il ritratto à sua màesta."—Hist. del Granducato—Galluzzi.

Henry, at this period, destined the hand of his sister, Madame Catherine, for the duke.

In 1592, the famous Alessandro Farnese duke of Parma, asked the princess in marriage, for his son Ranuzio; but Philip II. forbade the alliance, as Spanish politics encouraged the disunion rather than the union of the sovereigns of Italy. The duke of Braganza,[1] was then proposed by his Catholic majesty as a suitable husband for Donna Maria. The Medici, however, aspired to a more august alliance than that with the son of a princess whose claims to the crown of Portugal had been disallowed; but whose family, nevertheless, continued to be viewed with intense jealousy by the Spanish court. Duke Ferdinand, therefore, declined the alliance. The following year, 1593, the Emperor Rodolph II. piqued at his rejection by the infanta—or rather by the refusal of Philip II. to give the Low Countries to Doña Isabel, in case she espoused her imperial cousin—signified his desire to marry the young princess. The morose and fierce temper of Rodolph rendered his suit unwelcome; the emperor passed his life amongst his horses, or in conference with his alchemists. Ministers waited on their imperial master in his magnificent stables, who usually submitted their propositions to the wisdom of his astrologers; or rendered such conditional on the success of some wondrous process of transmutation, which might yield him the precious metal they required. The diadem of the Cæsars,

[1] Don Teodoro II. duque de Braganza, father of Juan duke de Braganza, who successfully asserted his right to the Portuguese throne, and reigned under the title of Don Juan IV. Duke Theodore espoused Doña Aña de Velasco Giron. The duke's mother was great-grand-daughter of Emanuel the Great king of Portugal.

nevertheless, was too glorious a trophy to be rejected; and the contemplated alliance continued to occupy a place in the Tuscan despatches to the court of Vienna until the year 1597.[1] The emperor then had lost desire for the alliance: immersed in the pursuits to which he devoted his gloomy existence, Rodolph despatched his privy-councillor Coraduccio to Florence, to propose that mention of the alliance should be suspended until after the close of the war in Hungary against the Turks; and that it should then be optional on the part of his imperial majesty either to espouse the princess Marie, or to bestow her upon his brother the archduke Matthias, on the proclamation of the latter as king of the Romans. The antipathy of the princess to marriage with her German kindred was intense: the archduke, moreover, was deformed, dwarfish, and profligate. Ferdinand therefore yielded to the wishes of his niece, and declined the imperial overtures; foreseeing that shortly the crown matrimonial of France would be at the disposal of Henry IV. Another undignified overture nevertheless was made by duke Ferdinand on the demise of Philip II., to marry his niece to the young king of Spain; although Marie was ten years older than his Catholic majesty. The archduchess Maximiliana the *fiancée* of Philip III., died of the plague, as she was about to journey into Spain; and though the name of her sister Marguerite was at once substituted in the marriage contract, duke Ferdinand sought to interpose the alliance of his wealthy

1 "Il trattato che suo zio aveva intraprese con l'Imperatore, e che per via di termini e prorogue era stato pendente sette anni l'avea gettata in una profonda malinconia si perché la principessa vedea differirsi senza speranza la conclusione del suo matrimonio." —Galluzzi.

niece. The way is unique by which the duke sought to propitiate and rouse the fancy of the youthful king; who from the first day of his reign slothfully deposited the sceptre of Charles V. in the hands of his ex-tutor Don Francisco Gomez de Sandoval marquis de Denia.[1] He despatched a clever buffoon as a present to the young king, and instructed the former perpetually to laud the beauty of the princess, and the generosity of her uncle. As a trophy of his wealth and magnificence, the duke sent Philip a complete equipment for the chase, including rich liveries for his *piqueurs:* also a habit beset with diamonds, of a fashion so novel as to attract the envious admiration of the Spanish grandees.[2] These wiles, however, neither propitiated the Spanish minister, nor placed the crown of the Spains on the head of Marie de Medici. In December of the year 1599, after the pope had nominated commissioners to pronounce on the validity of the marriage of Henri Quatre with queen Marguerite, Sillery, in obedience to instructions from Villeroy and Rosny, repaired to Florence confidentially to inquire of the grand-duke whether his present policy and inclination permitted him to complete the alliance originally proposed by Gondy; also whether he would give his august niece a dowry of one million of scudi? The ambassador was received with open arms; the grand-duke declared that the most glorious and joyful event of his life would be to behold the crown of St. Louis circle the brow of his beloved niece. The duke nevertheless stated his desire that these overtures should be kept profoundly secret until after the publication of

[1] Afterwards duke de Lerma.

[2] Galluzzi—Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. Salazar de Mendoza —Vida de don Felipe III., Rey de España.

the pontifical bull dissolving the marriage of his Christian majesty. On the subject of the dowry of madame Marie, however, Gondy had committed a blunder, which nearly put an end to the negotiation. The duke offered Gondy the loan of a million scudi for the service of Henry IV.; but the cardinal reported that Ferdinand had proposed this sum as the dowry of his niece—a statement which had influenced Rosny in his election of the Florentine princess as the future bride of Henry IV. The duke stated that the dowry of his niece was 600,000 gold scudi; that he undertook to furnish her with jewels and regal paraphernalia; and would transport the bridal cortége to Marseilles at the cost of the Tuscan treasury. His highness candidly confessed that the million demanded might have been at the disposal of a less potent prince; but the dignity of his house would suffer, should a report become prevalent in Europe that a princess of Medici had purchased the crown of the *fleurs-de-lis* by the opulence of her dowry. Sillery made no official response; but advised the duke to send a confidential envoy into France, to confer on these matters with Rosny; and to obtain the sign-manual of the king authorizing the negotiation. Accordingly the under-secretary of state, Bacio Giovannini,[1] was despatched to Paris; where he arrived on the third of February, in the midst of the *tracasserie* occasioned by the conferences on the affair of Saluzzo.

[1] Giovannini rose from the humble calling of groom to Bartolomeo Concini, minister of duke Cosimo I. Under the protection of Concini, he became secretary to the grand-duchesses Giovanna and Bianca, and, finally, was promoted by duke Ferdinand to be under-secretary of state.—Galluzzi e Ammirato—Istoria Florentina.

Marie de Medici was the daughter of Francis I., grand-duke of Tuscany, and of the archduchess Jane, daughter of Ferdinand I., whose married life had been imbittered by the *liaison* of the grand-duke with the celebrated Bianca Capello. The princess was born August 26th, 1573, and was consequently in her 27th year. Marie was four years old when she lost her mother, whose pious and conciliatory character would doubtless have exercised beneficial influence over the temper and mind of her daughter. The memory of the sombre humour of her father; the tears and melancholy of the unhappy grand-duchess; and the bold patronizing magnificence of Bianca, were deeply impressed on the memory of the princess. The first maternal caresses she received were mingled with tears: the earliest instruction remembered issued from the hated lips of La Bianca, who had been appointed to the post of governess to the princesses by their father. On the death of the grand-duchess in 1577, Francisco secretly espoused his mistress; who thereupon resigned her office of governess to the princess, which post was bestowed upon Donna Francesca Orsini, cousin of Paolo Giordino Orsini, duc de Bracciano, brother-in-law of the grand-duke. The childhood of Marie de Medici had been cheerless and solitary: neglected by her father, and tyrannised over by the *parvenue* Venetian, whose misconduct had poisoned the life of the late grand-duchess, Marie imbibed that hate and frantic jealousy of illicit relations which rendered her subsequent career one of miserable contest. Under the able tuition of Donna Francesca, Marie acquired accomplishments, and displayed considerable ability as a linguist. Her handwriting is exquisitely delicate; and the Italian of

her epistles elegant. She loved poetry; and one of her most prized recreations was to wander amid the groves of the famed Boboli gardens, the work of her grandfather Cosimo, book in hand, to meditate and study. On the accession of her uncle Ferdinand in 1587, the life of the princess Marie became brighter, especially after the arrival of the bride of the grand-duke, the witty and gracious Christine de Lorraine. The palace was cleared of the rapacious sycophants of the duchess Bianca; whose memory was so abhorred by the Tuscan people, that they applauded the decision of the grand-duke to refuse sepulture to *la maladetta Bianca* in the Medici chapel in St. Lorenzo. The banishment from court of these personages was complete, with but one exception. By that person, however, though apparently insignificant, more evil was accomplished and greater misfortune ensued, than if the whole greedy crew of courtiers had been retained. The duchess Bianca had placed about the person of the princess Marie, in the humble position of second tirewoman, a young girl named Eleonore Dori, the daughter of a turner of Florence, whose wife had been wet nurse to the princess. Eleonore pleased the princess by her gentle touch, and by her skill in dressing hair. The gliding step, soft eyes and voice, and humble demeanour of her tirewoman soon attracted the attention of Marie. From tirewoman Eleonore Dori became reader to the princess; and the *confidente* of the mortifications felt by her mistress at the perpetual rupture of the overtures made to obtain her hand. Marie, it was suspected, had not reached the age of twenty-seven without finding her heart touched by a cavalier of the splendid court of her uncle; though ambition had repressed the acknow-

ledgment of the inclination which she once felt for her cousin Don Virginio Orsini duc de Bracciano. The duke was one of the handsomest and most chivalrous cavaliers of Europe; and had likewise evinced great devotion for Marie, both before and after his own union with Fulvia Peretti, niece of the deceased pontiff Sixtus V. In Eleonore Dori, therefore, the princess found a ready sympathizer, and a discreet recipient of her past preferences and present dissatisfactions.

The Tuscan envoy, meanwhile, arrived at the French court February 3rd, 1600, and immediately entered into conference with Rosny and Villeroy. The king, though cognizant of the objects of the mission, purposely maintained a studied silence; and seemed more than ever devoted to his mistress. In consequence of the erroneous report made by Gondy and his kindred relative to the dowry of the princess, duke Ferdinand expressly excluded them from participation in the pending negotiation. The cardinal, therefore, with his brother, the duke de Retz, and Biron, opposed the intended marriage; and united with the nuncio in supporting the pretensions of an Austrian archduchess,[1] sister of the queen of Spain. Clement hated the grand-ducal family; but yet had no plausible reason to allege against the elevation of the princess Marie to the throne of France. The pope at length raked up, with the aid of Spain, an old quarrel relative to a canal excavated through a marshy plain lying[2] between the rivers Arno and

[1] The archduchess Maria Maddelena. She eventually espoused Cosmo, son and heir of duke Ferdinand of Tuscany.

[2] This marsh was named Le Chiane, "che estendendosi in lunghezza fra l'Arno ed il Tevere sfoga, per mezzo dei due estremi l'acque che gli sovrabbondano nell uno e nell' altro fiume."—Duke Ferdinand had cut a canal through Le Chiane.

Tiber—an old subject of contention between the Roman and Florentine people — in the hope of involving the grand-duke in hostilities, which might frustrate his contemplated alliance with France. As for the duke of Savoy, the insolence of his allusions to the Medici and their plebeian origin, was surpassed only by the contemptuous indifference with which he treated the ministers of the king. He scornfully alluded to the grand-duke as the "merchant duke Prince of bankers"—a petty spite the more grateful, inasmuch as a hot rivalry subsisted for precedency between the ambassadors of the courts of Turin and Florence. Mademoiselle d'Entragues abetted the duke's malice; and presumed, in her own peculiar circle, to deny the possibility of the king's marriage, as, she said, his majesty was "her own affianced husband." In private Henriette regaled the king with tears, reproaches, and threats: she demanded the dismissal of Rosny and Villeroy, and insisted that the Tuscan envoy should receive his passports. At times her anger amounted to frenzy, so as actually to terrify the king into assumed compliance with her demands. The negotiation, however, proceeded, and would soon have been favourably solved but for the persistency with which Henry's ministers demanded the dowry of one million of scudi. This obstacle, which for several days threatened to put an end to the alliance, occasioned great ferment in Florence. The citizens, who ardently desired to behold their princess the consort of Henri Quatre, convened a meeting of the principal senators and nobles of the grand duchy, the members of which deputed Jacopo Corsi to wait upon the duke, and beseech him to yield to the demands of the French council on the dowry of his niece; as the citizens

were willing to make donation of the contested sum of 400,000 scudi.[1] Ferdinand thanked his loyal Florentines, but explained that honour, and not avarice, closed his coffers. "Many will envy my niece the august honour of sharing the throne of a hero: invidious, therefore, will these comments become if it can be said that the kindred of madame Marie purchased that illustrious position for her by the extravagance of her dowry." Fresh instructions were, however, transmitted to Giovannini. He was directed to ask audience of the king; and to consult principally with M. de Rosny, whose real anxiety to conclude the alliance was appreciated by the grand-duke. The dower of the princess was fixed at 600,000 scudi; though a discretionary power was given to the envoy to add another sum of 100,000 scudi, should he deem such concession indispensable. The audience of the envoy with the king was particularly enforced. The strange indifference demonstrated by Henry was triumphantly reported by the legate to his court, from whence the rumour reached Florence, and had given intense mortification to the princess. The assurance and insolent airs of mademoiselle d'Entragues and her father, moreover, began to inspire uneasy misgivings at the court of France. Giovannini, therefore, received precise commands to confer with his majesty before the honour of the grand-ducal family was further compromised. Never was prince more perplexed than Henry: fettered by

[1] "Jacopo Corsi uno dei principali fra la nobiltà informato delle pendenti contestazione sulla quantità della dote, ebbe il coraggio di supplicare il G. Duca a nome dei suoi concittadini di disistere dalle opposizioni e offerire le richezze di ciascheduno per contribuire alla dote richiesta."—Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

the promise so tenaciously guarded by M. d'Entragues; enslaved by the beauty of his imperious mistress; yet, now that the first transports of his passion for Henriette had subsided, sensible of the folly he had committed, Henry offered but negative opposition to the matrimonial projects of his ministers. Indeed, the stately *embonpoint* and handsome features of the Tuscan princess had already made so vivid an impression on Henry's susceptible heart, as to occasion paroxysms of jealous passion in the bosom of his mistress.[1] M. d'Entragues, and his step-son the count d'Auvergné, boasted of the obligations contracted by his majesty towards Henriette; they audaciously referred to her approaching *accouchement* as an event likely to solve his majesty's vacillation, if a spark of honour resided in the royal breast; while they significantly challenged MM. de Montmorency and de Rosny to disprove their assertion. These *tracasseries* secretly irritated the king; and made him eager to destroy expectations, illusory and so disrespectfully affirmed. Consequently Rosny proposed to the king to grant private audience to the Tuscan envoy; and explained the uneasiness which the unpleasant reports in circulation occasioned to duke Ferdinand—who had been warned that the king intended eventually to repudiate the overtures of alliance made by his ministers—and was therefore unwilling to proceed further in the matter unless fully satisfied of the royal sincerity. Henry admitted the reasonableness of the grand-duke's request, and agreed to grant audience to Giovannini at the country house of Villeroy at Conflans. The interview took place about the 25th of February. Henry courteously

1 "Henriette reprocha au roi son inconstance, et ce qu'elle appeloit, sa trahison et ses parjures."

greeted Giovannini; but expressed his disappointment at the amount of dowry offered by the grand-duke: "the million of gold scudi," said his majesty, "I destined to expend on the formation of a naval armada for my port of Marseilles." Giovannini explained, apparently to the satisfaction of the king; for he proved that the dowry of Marie de Medici equalled that of any preceding queen of France. A debate then ensued between Rosny and the envoy in the royal presence; during which, as both parties were eager, an understanding was speedily achieved. The sum of 600,000[1] scudi was finally accepted; 250,000 of which were to be immediately paid into the bank of Girolamo Gondy in Florence; and the remaining 350,000 delivered to Rosny at Marseilles on the arrival of madame Marie, or at the conclusion of the marriage festivities. Henry then authorized his ministers, Rosny and Villeroy, to proceed in all matters of detail and etiquette necessary to complete the formal betrothal between himself and Marie de Medici. "I am content—I will marry and consent to what you wish, only hasten the affair," said Henry significantly to Rosny. His majesty then asked if the princess had really the majesty of deportment attributed to her?—and whether the envoy believed that she would soon give a dauphin to France, fair and comely as was his son of Vendôme?" Satisfied on these points, Henry bade farewell to the envoy, and left the latter in conference with Rosny. "You perceive," said the latter, "how the king trusts me, though he so stoutly abuses me to my face. Let your master confide in me. We must, however, be cautious and secret to hide the fact at present from

[1] About 120,000*l.* sterling—an immense dowry, considering the relative value of money at that period.

that baggage d'Entragues, as I tell you she has it in her power greatly to annoy and disquiet his majesty!"[1] Such was the activity of the two ministers, aided by Villeroy, that the principal articles of the marriage treaty were drawn and signed by noon the following day; and required only the royal approval to be transmitted to Florence. Rosny suddenly entered the royal cabinet to announce these tidings. "*Nous venons, Sire, de vous marier!*" exclaimed he. "Our prince," relates Rosny, "remained for about the space of a quarter of an hour as if thunderstruck. He then began to walk rapidly about the room, scratching his head, biting his nails, and absorbed by the startling contemplation. 'Well!' exclaimed his majesty, at last striking one hand upon the other, 'well! Pardieu! So be it! There is no remedy! You say the weal of my kingdom requires that I should be married—so I will marry!'"[2] Despatches were accordingly prepared by the triumphant Rosny, and forwarded to Sillery and to M. d'Alinceurt in Rome, announcing the king's determination; which, however, until after the departure of M. de Savoye from the French court, was not to be proclaimed. The ambassadors were busily employed in mediating between his holiness and the grand-duke on the affair of the canal; a paltry feud, which at length they succeeded in adjusting. Henry's ministers also desired to gain time, to draw from MM. d'Entragues the written promise of marriage given by the king to Henriette. It was felt to be an insult to the young princess chosen to share Henry's throne that such a document should remain uncancelled on her arrival; and

[1] Istoria del Granducato—Galluzzi, lib. 5.

[2] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11ème. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

at this period so deeply did Henry believe his honour compromised, that he refrained from himself addressing the princess, until further measures had been taken to subdue the contumacy of the Balzac family. Henry wrote, however, to the grand-duke:[1] his letter contains numerous expressions of good will towards the grand-ducal family; but refers the duke to his secretary Giovannini, who, his majesty states, will impart to the duke that fortune had at length placed him in a position to render the latter a testimony of good will, equally grateful to his feelings to confer, as he believed it would be to the duke to receive. This reserve, however, affected and offended the princess Marie; and kindled the first spark of that frenzied jealousy of Henriette de Balzac which was never allayed.

The duke of Savoye, meantime, trifled, intrigued, and perfidiously probed the loyalty of the great nobles of France. "My journey into France is to sow, and not to reap!" exclaimed the duke ominously. M. de Savoye also continued to decline compromise on the affair of Saluzzo; and though in the power of Henri Quatre, he daringly abused the indulgence of the latter. At length M. Zamet was commissioned to compile certain propositions, which might hasten the duke's departure. It was again proposed that the duke of Savoy should cede to the crown of France, in exchange for the marquisate of Saluzzo, the county of Bresse, the citadel of Bourg, the vicariat of Barceloncttn, Pignerol, with the valleys of Perosa and d'Estura. Three months' grace was conceded, in order that M.

[1] Archives de Florence, liasse 3; published by M. B. de Xivrey—Lettres Missives; and by Galluzzi—Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. Ammirato, Istoria Fiorentina.

de Savoye might take counsel at home with his ministers, whether it was most to his interest to restore the marquisate, or to make cession of the territory indicated. These conditions were signed by king Henry and by his guest on the 27th of February: both princes, however, were sensible of the compromise, and felt that the sword alone could decide their quarrel; and both separated with the resolve each to maintain his rights. On taking leave of M. de Savoye, Henry informed the duke of his intended alliance with the Medici; a communication the more surprising as his majesty had not addressed Marie de Medici, nor yet made to the princess a direct offer of his hand and throne. With matchless dissimulation M. de Savoye congratulated the king on his choice of a consort; he lauded the virtue and beauty[1] of the princess Marie; and even asked the royal interest, so that a good understanding might be re-established between Savoy and Florence by the future alliance of one of his daughters with the young heir of Tuscany! The duke took his departure from Paris on the 7th of March, accompanied by the count de Praslin and the baron de Lux, nephew of the late archbishop of Lyons Espinac—a personage eventually taken into confidence by Biron, for the prosecution of his treasonable schemes. These personages escorted the duke to the town of Bourg. They reported that the latter melted into tears as he surveyed its proud citadel, the cession of which, according to his recent compact with Henri Quatre, he had promised to consider. "Make my salutations to the king, your master," said M. de Savoye, on

[1] "Non può esser migliore la scelta che avete fatta della moglie, perchè la principessa Maria é dotata di virtù e di bellezze tali che ella è degna della Maestà Vostra."

taking leave of the French cavaliers, "and say that I am satisfied with our treaty, and will proceed immediately to Piedmont to give it effect!" No sooner, however, was the duke installed in his palace of Turin, than he set about maturing those machinations by the which he trusted to overthrow the newly-established throne of Henri IV.[1] The condé de Fuentes had arrived in Milan; this "champion of Spain," having been despatched by Lerma and his cabinet, to neutralize the league hostile to Spanish ascendancy, which was supposed as likely to result from the intended alliance between the French and Tuscan courts. The prospects afforded by the disaffection of the duke de Biron rejoiced the spirit of that determined foe of France; while every inducement likely to foment the resentment of pope Clement at the rejection by Henry of his niece was also unscrupulously applied. M. Lafin, the agent of the duke de Biron, met with ovations from the Milanese viceroy; a fact which, coming to the knowledge of Rosny, roused his ever vigilant scrutiny as to the motive for the extraordinary honours paid to so obscure an individual by the haughty Fuentes.

Henry, meanwhile, beset on every side with cabals, rewarded the fidelity of his zealous minister Rosny by conferring upon him the office of grand-master of artillery, on the resignation of the aged marquis d'Estrées, father of the late duchesse de Beaufort. The charge was declared one of the great offices of the crown; its emoluments amounted to 24,000

[1] The duke is related to have been ever muttering to himself, "Qu'il tiendrait le marquisat malgré tous les Bigarrets du monde!" The duke meant, by the term "Bigarrets," a satirical allusion to the slashed and puffed dress of the cavaliers of the court of Henri Quatre.

crowns. As compensation to d'Estrées for his resignation of a post the duties of which he was no longer competent to fulfil, Rosny paid 80,000 crowns. The day following his nomination, Rosny commenced his favourite functions of reformer and redresser of grievances throughout his new department. At one stroke of the pen Rosny dismissed 500 inferior officers who received public moneys, and gave no equivalent. The bargains concluded with various traders in iron for the supply of metal for the foundries of the Arsenal were revised; and the alternative offered to them of a fair adjustment, or the abrogation of the contracts. The buildings of the Arsenal were out of repair: on the reconstruction of the latter Rosny immediately set; and, the better to superintend the works, he removed with his family into the fortress, which from thenceforth continued to be his abode when in Paris. To provide for these extraordinary expenses various retrenchments were made in the household: amongst other economies, two dishes of very sumptuous confection, daily served on the royal table were suppressed, the yearly cost of which amounted to 36,000 crowns.[1]

The domestic griefs of Madame occupied the attention of the king during the greater part of the month of March, to the exclusion of almost every other subject. Henry was sincerely attached to his sister; and although he blamed her pertinacious resolve not to belong to that church which had pronounced "her beloved and admirable mother, queen Jeanne, accursed," his majesty equally deprecated the cowardly plaints of M. de Bar, who had so eagerly petitioned for the alliance. The duke professed, and to all appearance felt, tender admiration

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11ème. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1614.

for Madame:[1] at intervals, however, his heinous sin in espousing a heretic, and by such act having sullied the glorious blazon of his orthodox ancestry, seems to have driven M. de Bar to the verge of distraction. Such was his horror, that he prayed that God would withhold from him the blessing of offspring; and in the paroxysms of his remorse after conference with his confessor, the duke was often seen to cast himself on the pavement before the altar, and give vent to his anguish in audible sobs and wails. A few hours subsequently M. de Bar might be seen kneeling at the feet of his consort, supplicating for pardon with passionate entreaty. Madame was frequently awakened in the middle of the night by the remorseful groans of her husband. The duke, assailed by sudden compunction, often sprang from his bed, and, throwing himself on his knees by Madame, implored her with clasped hands to have mercy on his soul, as he could neither live with her nor leave her. Occasionally M. de Bar menaced Madame with repudiation, a threat which she knew the papal court would gladly confirm. The duke of Lorraine showed scanty courtesy to Madame's chaplains, who were burdened with irksome restrictions. The distraction of M. de Bar reached its climax when a pontifical missive of considerable length, and eloquently written, failed to shake the religious resolves of Madame. "Most noble lady," wrote Clement, in this impassioned letter of remonstrance,[2] "do you doubt that the glorious example

[1] "Le Duc, mari de Madame, ne faisoit que crier qu'il étoit damné; et se mettant à genou devant elle souvent même la nuit près de son lit la prioit d'avoir pitié de luy et de son âme." —M.S. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

[2] MSS. Harleian, B. Museum, 4449, fol. 20.

set by a great king — the very Christian king Henry, your brother—can be unworthy of your imitation? Madame, the king, your brother, the princes of Lorraine, with whom you have allied yourself, and ourselves, are moved with compassion for your miserable condition—a fate unhappy indeed, unless you yourself feel and confess your wretchedness. We notify to you that you stand without the pale of the Church, without God, without hope of salvation—a captive under the yoke of the devil! What can be more deplorable than the position of a woman of your rank, illegally married to a prince, your relative?—for, until you have obtained from us and this Holy See dispensation to marry, there can be no true marriage between you! We have, however, sworn and decreed never to issue the said licence until you shall have made abjuration of heresy. From unlawful wedlock none but illegitimate children spring: you, therefore, inflict irreparable injury on your offspring, for such can never be accounted princes of the orthodox race of Lorraine. Madame, can you with ease of heart doom your children to such calamity, and lose your own soul? Have pity, have pity on your children: have compassion on your soul! Listen, my daughter, listen to those holy catholic divines, who are consumed with zeal for your salvation. Listen, daughter, to our paternal counsel; for we daily supplicate Almighty God to grant us the fruition of our desires concerning you, that we may speedily welcome you into the bosom of our holy church. Beware, therefore, that you reject not the grace of God, and in the hardness and impenitence of your heart heap up wrath against the day of the revelation of the just judgment of God

Almighty! I henceforth protest before God and man that I am innocent of your blood!"[1] Madame wept as the worldly peril of her position was set before her by her husband's brother, the young cardinal de Lorraine. Letters from king Henry of afflicting import also reached her; in which he harshly declared his resolve not to own as his sister "a woman repudiated by a prince of Lorraine; or the mother of bastard children." The duke de Bar, overwhelmed by the letter addressed to himself that accompanied the brief sent to Madame, and which contained a papal prohibition against treating longer as his wife a heretic princess, announced his resolve to set out for Rome, to obtain pontifical absolution for the sin of which he had been guilty. The royal representatives in Rome, cardinal d'Ossat and M. de Sillery, were accordingly much chagrined by the arrival, on Ascension day 1600, of the Sieur de Beauvau, gentleman to M. de Bar, who announced the speedy presence of his master, and the purport of his errand. The envoys, aware of the resolve of the supreme pontiff "*de catoliser Madame*," descried nothing but mortification and embarrassment from this ill-advised visit. "Nothing can be done, sire," wrote d'Ossat to Henri IV.; "the duke de Bar will return with the shame of rejection; or else he will leave Rome absolved, and bound by a solemn promise to repudiate your sister, unless Madame makes abjuration." The cardinal had opportunity, during the course of the same

[1] Clement VIII. P.P. à Madame Sœur du Roy. Donnè à Rome à St. Pierre soubz le cachet du Pecheur le 26 Janvier, 1600 l'an de Jubilé, et de notre Pontificat le 8ème. Countersigned: Sylvius Aldobrandini—Cardinal. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

day, to speak with Clement as he passed from St. Peter's to the hall of Consistory. Like a skilful diplomatist, d'Ossat carelessly alluded to the sudden visit of M. de Bar; stating that he was informed his highness intended to make his abode in the Convent de la Trinité du Mont. Clement frowned, and said "that he supposed the duke came to ask absolution for his heinous sin, and to seek a dispensation to legalize his marriage; but that so long as Madame should persist in her heresy he would rather be drawn and quartered[1] than grant the said absolution." After the arrival of the duke (April 15) the French envoys visited him; they found his highness plunged in abject contrition for "his fault," and reviling his wife for her blasphemous follies. M. de Beauvau presently drew M. d'Ossat apart, and privately informed him "that his lord duke had resolved, after much mental conflict, to repudiate madame his consort, should the pope make this step the *sine qua non* of absolution." This indiscreet revelation being imparted to king Henry, so angered his majesty as to cause an intimation to be forthwith forwarded to the courts of Rome and Nancy, to the effect that, "although king Henry earnestly desired the spiritual and temporal welfare of his sister, and was ready to promote her abjuration, yet that no affront could be tolerated which might offend the august dignity of Madame, Sœur du Roy." The pope, after much entreaty, admitted the duke to audience at the Vatican, on the 26th of May, privately and at nightfall. The particulars of the interview were not publicly divulged;

[1] "Qu'il se feroit plutôt mettre en quatre quartiers, pour les raisons qu'il avoit ci-devant alleguées."—Lettres du Car. d'Ossat—Lettre 227.

the result, however, was that, on the petition of M. de Bar, the pope appointed a commission, consisting of the cardinals Bellarmino, d'Ossat, St. Severino, and of three ecclesiastical dignitaries, to consider whether—"the pope might lawfully grant the marriage dispensation with absolution; secondly, whether in the event of such being pronounced inexpedient, the duke nevertheless might be absolved, and receive the holy Eucharist." These ecclesiastics met on the 14th of June. It was agreed, "that his holiness might alone grant dispensation legalizing the marriage of the duke and duchess de Bar on the conversion of the latter—the sin of disobedience being previously absolved, committed by these illustrious persons in espousing each other without the papal benison; but that while M. de Bar was living "with a woman, his cousin in the third degree of parentage, the said duke could not be admitted to partake of the Eucharist." The cardinals, however, petitioned his holiness to allow them to discuss and seek to reconcile the terms of a dispensation which might be granted to the duke, should Madame persist in her errors. This conciliatory measure was adopted out of deference for king Henry, whose agent, d'Ossat, was a member of the commission. Clement, having obtained the decision he wished, refused to make concession. "*Il n'est pas permis; il n'est pas expedient,*" replied he, hotly, to the intercession of the French envoys. His holiness then condescended to explain that such indulgence would "harden the conscience of Madame, who was only to be worked upon by her dread of the disgrace of divorcement: that he ardently desired her abjuration, and would send cardinal Bellarmine to Nancy, or the cardinal

de Medici; in short," continued Clement, "so earnestly have I resolved to effect this great work, that I will even visit Madame myself—and I say this in all sincerity."[1] Clement, therefore, directed Bellarmine to wait upon M. de Bar, and notify the decision of the commission named on the petition of his highness. The pitiful dejection of the duke was extreme: after a night of agitation he sent his secretary Beauvau to Bellarmine, June 28, with the following message: "That to earn absolution, to gain the jubilee, and for permission to communicate, he promised to separate from Madame his consort, publicly, and in the most open fashion; or, should that be impossible, he engaged never more to live with her unless she abjured her heresy. That it was his intention to write the same to king Henry—to whit, that he was resolved not to consummate his eternal perdition; and that if he could not save his soul with Madame, he was resolved to put her away, unless she made profession of the true faith." D'Ossat was immediately informed by Bellarmine of this declaration in the papal anti-chamber. The prelates agreed that the weakness of M. de Bar placed his holiness in notable dilemma:[2] for the pope could not refuse the sacraments to so tractable and humble a penitent; neither could he commend or sanction the repudiation of Madame, without incurring the wrath of king Henry. Clement, however,

[1] Lettre du cardinal d'Ossat au Roy—Lettres 230, 231.

[2] Lettres 232, 244. The pope refused even to hear the name of the confessor chosen by M. de Bar, so fearful was he of displeasing king Henry. Bellarmine notified to the duke, "Qu'il falloit que M. le duc pour gagner le jubilé etc, promit de ne ritourner point vers Madame qu'il n'eut la dispense."

extricated himself from this *mauvais pas* with his accustomed dexterity. He sent word to the duke to select his own confessor; if the latter approved the dispositions of his penitent, he should be authorized to administer absolution; nevertheless, the duke might not participate publicly in the services of Holy Church, inasmuch as he who commits a public sin must first atone for such in public. The repudiation of Madame not being yet effected; nor the resolution of the duke to treat her no longer as a consort proved, the said duke could alone participate privately in the sacraments.[1] M. de Bar, therefore, after again reiterating his promise, communicated in private, and made pilgrimage to the shrines of four churches. He then quitted Rome, without an audience of farewell from his holiness; and repaired to Florence, to visit his sister, the grand-duchess Christine. The spirit of Madame was now effectually roused; she declined all further conference on religious matters, and she treated her husband's letters with the silent scorn which they merited. The alienation between the august couple remained complete, as the holy father descried, until the affairs of king Henry enabled the duchess of Bar to visit the court of France.

The matrimonial negotiations of Henri Quatre, meantime, were absorbing the attention not only of his own subjects, but of all the potentates of Europe. In France rumours of the promise given by the king to mademoiselle d'Entragues got abroad, through the misconduct and boasting of the latter, and produced profound sensation. Henriette was beside herself with passion and mortification: she accused

[1] One of the rules, de la Penitencerie, of which the cardinal St. Severino was chief.

his majesty of perjured faith; and publicly spoke of the princess Marie as "La grosse Banquière." One day Henriette had the assurance to ask the king, at one of Zamet's *fêtes*, when he expected "sa grosse banquière?" "Madame," replied Henry, "we expect her when our court shall be purged of such as you!"[1] The *mot* of the king spread through Paris, and caused great merriment; for dread of the weakness of their king made the French hail even the prospect of renewed alliance with the Medici. The audacity of the favourite rendered it, however, politic to reduce her pretensions before the arrival of the future queen. The king, therefore, quitted Paris for Fontainebleau during the month of April, highly incensed; and by the advice of Rosny he wrote thus to demand restitution of the promise of marriage:—

The King to Mademoiselle d'Entragues.

"MADEMOISELLE—The affection, the honours, and the benefit which you have received from me must have inspired the most volatile mind with gratitude, had not such been combined with a temper, evil, like your own. I will not reproach you more, though you know that so I ought to do, and that I possess the power. I beg you to send me immediately the promise which you know; and do not give me the trouble to compel its return by other means. Return me also the ring, which I gave back to you the other day. You perceive and understand the purport of this missive; to which I demand a response before nightfall.

"HENRY.[2]

"This Friday morning, April 26th, at Fontainebleau."

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. MS.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. F. Dupuy, MS. 407, fol. 36. Printed by M. Berger de Xivrey, and M. Serieys, in their respective

King Henry also wrote to M. d'Entragues, peremptorily demanding the restoration of the mischievous promise. Both M. d'Entragues and his daughter, who were at their castle of Marcoussy, had the audacity to refuse compliance with the royal request; nor would they state what had become of the famous promise, or where the parchment was deposited. Henriette, supported by her brother, M. d'Auvergne, steadily maintained that she was the king's lawful wife, and acknowledged to be so under the royal sign-manual; and declared that she cast back the opprobrious epithet of "mistress" on the Florentine adventuress, did the latter presume to set her foot on the soil of France. The tongue and ready pen of mademoiselle d'Entragues were more than a match for Rosny and his royal master combined; there was no resource, therefore, but to allow Henriette full licence to declaim and protest as she pleased, and to proceed with the king's marriage as if no such obstacle existed. Rosny counselled arrest and the Bastille, as the method likely to bring M. d'Entragues and his daughter to their senses; but Henry, though angered and temporarily alienated, was as infatuated as ever with his mistress. This ineffectual attempt to regain possession of the king's written promise of marriage was made precisely at the period when Henry's ambassadors, M. d'Alincourt and de Sillery, were signing in Florence the contract which bound him to another woman — a

editions of the letters of Henri IV. Mademoiselle d'Entragues made no reply to this missive, and continued to baffle the attempts made by the king to procure information where the important "promise" was deposited. The king at this time believed that Henriette had intrusted the document to her kinsman the duke of Lennox.

princess whose imperious temper could scarcely brook the semblance of contradiction or insult. "Affairs press," wrote Villeroy, to the cavaliere de Vinta, minister of the grand-duke; "it is time now to sign and conclude. The king consents. Let us not dispute."[1] The ambassadors entered Florence on the 22nd of April by torch-light. The city was illuminated, and a cavalcade of Florentine nobles, headed by Don Giovanni and Don Antonio de Medici,[2] met the ambassadors at the gates. They were received by Duke Ferdinand at the portal of the Pitti Palace, and were by him conducted into the presence of the grand-duchess Christine and of the princess Marie. Sillery was greatly impressed with the majestic figure of Marie de Medici, with her brilliant complexion, and white hands and arms. The marriage articles were signed on the following day. The dowry of Marie was 600,000 gold scudi; the duke engaged to present her with jewels and bridal paraphernalia, and liberally refused to place limit to his generosity. The annual revenue apportioned to the future queen was that of her predecessors; and the power of making testamentary bequests was conceded.[3] Alincourt immediately quitted Florence to present this document to king Henry; while M. de Sillery remained to witness the proclamation of the intended marriage. This ceremony was performed on Sunday, April 30th, with lavish pomp. Indeed, the elevation

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. "Non è ormai più tempo di contestare, bisogna accordarsi e concludere."—Villeroy al cavaliere de Vinta

[2] Don Giovanni was the natural son of Cosimo, by Camilla Martelli. Don Antonio was the son born before marriage of duke Francesco I. by Bianca Capello.

[3] Contract de marriage du roi Henri IV. et de Marie de Medici.—Leonard, t. 2—Moetjens, t. 2, p. 640.

of his niece, and consequently of the Medici, so greatly elated the grand-duke, as to deprive him of his usual circumspection. Sillery received a warm reprimand from M. de Rosny for not having repressed the duke's unseemly transports. Rosny was chafing under the sharp inflictions of Henriette de Balzac; and suffered some mental qualms as to whether the Florentine alliance, after all, might not be proved invalid. The senate and the principal citizens of Florence repaired to the Pitti Palace, on the invitation of their duke. A dais was erected in the hall of assembly, upon which was a throne surmounted by a canopy *fleurdelisé*. On each side stood chairs for the grand-duke and his duchess. Upon the throne sat the princess Marie, "in the glory of her beauty and state," though the assumption of the latter as queen was deemed by the French court premature, especially as the marriage by proxy had not been celebrated. By the side of the queen-elect was Eleonore Dori; for Marie, with characteristic obstinacy, had insisted on the presence of her humble favourite. The cavaliere Vinta read aloud the marriage contract; and announced the speedy arrival of a representative from his Christian majesty to espouse the princess. This address was responded to by the *vivas* of the assemblage; and by an elegant oration pronounced by the president of the senate, Donato del' Antella. Duke Ferdinand then rose, and ascending the steps of the dais, paid homage to the bride elect of Henri Quatre by kissing the hem of her mantle. The grand-duchess followed the example of her consort; an obeisance subsequently tendered by every noble personage present.[1]

Vivid elation shone in the eyes of Marie de Medici;

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

and it is recorded that she demeaned herself with a dignity and self-possession which gave the ambassadors a high notion of her capacity. Such was the favourable report made to Villeroy of the intellectual gifts of Marie, that he predicted, if these anticipations were realized, that in less than a year after her arrival she would govern France. "The king," said he, "it is true, will always command; but he will resolve, will consult, and finally only please the queen. His majesty's weakness for beautiful and clever women is incorrigible."

Henry's first letter to his affianced bride was carried to Florence by M. de Frontenac, and delivered on the 24th of May, 1600. The letter was accompanied by a superb ring. His majesty does not give the title of queen to his bride; though Marie a fortnight previously, by the direction of her uncle, entitled herself *la Regina sposa de Francia.*

A Madame La Princesse de Toscane.

"The virtue and perfections which shine in you, and render you the admiration of the world, had long inspired me with the desire to serve and honour you in proportion to your merit. The report which I hear from Alincourt increases this wish; and as I cannot yet unfold to you myself my inviolable affection, I have sent you, madame, my faithful servant Frontenac to make this avowal in my name. He will reveal to you my heart, in which, madame, you will find not only the most passionate desire to cherish and love you all my life, as the mistress of my affection; but also the will to place myself beneath the yoke of your commandments, acknowledging your empire as sovereign of my actions. I hope one day to give you testimony of this; and also to confirm personally the faith which he (Frontenac) will tender on my behalf. I pray you to credit the said Frontenac as myself; and to

permit him, after having kissed your hands for me, to present to you the homage of a prince whom Heaven has destined for you; as your virtue and merit have been created for my felicity. This 24th day of May, in Paris."[1]

Henry never appends his full signature to his love-letters to Marie de Medici; but uses instead a small cipher, combining the initial letters of their names. This letter gave great content to the princess; though the growing discord between her affianced lord and the duke of Savoy seemed likely indefinitely to retard the celebration of the marriage. Already the armies of France were on the move towards the borders of Savoy to decide the quarrel relative to Saluzzo; as the dishonest trifling of the duke rendered it imperative on the king to vindicate his dignity. It is uncertain whether Marie de Medici was cognizant of the pretensions of Henriette de Balzac; doubtless, had the princess been aware how formidable was this rivalry, she would not so tranquilly have remained at Florence during the summer campaign which ensued. Marie took supreme pleasure in her new position at the Tuscan court; treated by her relatives with the respect and deference due to the consort of the puissant monarch of France, Marie condescended to take counsel of two persons only—of Virginio Orsini duc de Bracciano, and of Eleonore Dori. Her letters to the king were, however, humble and satisfactory. "In reply to your majesty's assurances, I can only respond by protestations of similar fervour. If heaven has caused your majesty to be born in order to honour and favour me

[1] Archives des Affaires Etrangères Florence; Correspondance Politique—MS. vol. ii., Lettres Missives de Henri IV.—Berger de Xivrey, t. 5, in 4to.

by holy marriage bonds, fortunate may I deem myself in being able to term myself your majesty's humble servant, if only God gives me grace to merit the favour of your majesty; and endows me with power to regulate and conform my actions according to your majesty's good pleasure and approval, which is my earnest desire," writes the princess, in reply to the king's first missive.[1] Nevertheless, Marie at this early period exhibited that ill-judging independence, and want of prudence, which subsequently marred the prosperity of her career. Duke Ferdinand, anxious to secure every advantage from so illustrious an alliance, entered into debate with the ambassadors, on the return of Alincourt, on the personages to be attached to the household of the new queen. The duke showed zeal in supporting the claims of certain personages; adding, that their nomination was especially desired by madame Marie. The princess thereupon, without previous conference with her uncle, sent for Alincourt, and, abruptly contradicting the statement made by the grand-duke, said, "that she cared for the appointment only of one personage; and desired that la signora Dori might still hold the office of chief dresser."[2] The request was referred to the king. Henry, who was aware of the influence exercised by Eleonore over the mind of his future consort, unfortunately replied that he would decide after personal conference with the queen. Marie having, however, confessed

[1] Marie commences her letter "Christianissima Maestà;" and she subscribes herself his majesty's "humilissima et obligatissima serva, Maria de Medici."—Archives de Florence, Bibl. Imp.—Lettres Missives—Berger de Xivrey, t. 5. This letter, of which a fac-simile is given by M. de Xivrey, is delicately and clearly written.

[2] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. Reign of duke Ferdinand I.

her indifference to the appointment of other of her countrymen to offices in her future household, Alincourt was instructed to refuse proposals to that effect. The intelligence, meanwhile, of the betrothal of Marie de Medici with Henri Quatre was officially communicated to the courts of Europe. In Italy the sensation was profound, and adverse. The Venetian government alone congratulated the Medici. The king of Spain and the duke of Savoy apprehended a league offensive and defensive between Tuscany, the Venetian republic, and France, for the recovery of Saluzzo—an impression confirmed by the warlike preparations of Henri Quatre; and by the appointment of the prince de Vaudemont, brother of the grand-duchess Christine, to the command of the galleys of Venice. Ferdinand, in his message to the king of Spain, said that the alliance between his niece and his Christian majesty ought to be regarded by the cabinet of Madrid as a fresh pledge of perpetual peace between the crowns of France and Spain; as the affection demonstrated by the queen-elect for her maternal kindred of Hapsburg was notorious. Philip III. drily responded, "that he wished facts might hereafter correspond with the assurances of his royal highness." The emperor Rodolph likewise showed dissatisfaction; and pretended to regret that notice of the intended negotiation had not been given him by the Tuscan ministry, as he felt a sincere affection for madame Marie himself! Pope Clement, after some interval of irresolution, determined to address congratulations to the grand-ducal family. His holiness wished to make *amende* to Henry for the rigour demonstrated in the affair of the duke and duchess de Bar; and Sillery intimated that the king would take in bad part any want of courtesy demon-

strated by the supreme pontiff towards his affianced bride Marie de Medici, after having virtually effected the separation of Madame from her husband. Clement thereupon wrote a cordial letter to duke Ferdinand, announcing his resolve to send his nephew, cardinal Aldobrandini, to perform the marriage by proxy in Florence; and also solemnly to espouse their Christian majesties after the arrival of the queen in France.

The court of France during these transactions was agitated by the old religious feuds between Romanist and Huguenot. M. Duplessis Mornay published a book during the month of December, 1599, intitulated, "Institution de la Sainte Eucharistie," in which it was stated that he proved by quotations from the fathers, that the primitive church rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, and interpreted the Holy Mysteries conformably with the views of Calvin. The work, which was written in the dry, dogmatical style peculiar to Mornay, created profound sensation. Every order throughout the realm—the university, the Sorbonne, the privy-council, eagerly scrutinized and challenged the authenticity of translations, and of polemical deductions so arrogantly proclaimed. The pope wrote to the king to express his concern that a personage of the rank of the governor of Saumur, and a privy-councillor, known to be peculiarly favoured by his majesty, should have been audacious enough to publish a book in which the supreme head of Christendom was blasphemously branded as "Antichrist." The pontifical letter closed with a request for the removal of Mornay—whom Clement designated as "his enemy"—from his seat in the councils of orthodox France. The king was equally surprised and offended by Mornay's zeal. No amount of indulgence had con-

ciliated the latter; who, without consideration for the difficult position of the king, presented perpetually to his master the disagreeable alternatives of abandoning his old and faithful servant; or of incurring the suspicion of still favouring in his heart reformed tenets. Mornay was ironically termed le Pape des Huguenots; while his admonitions contributed powerfully to confirm Madame in what was called "her contumacious course." Henry, therefore, was prepared to abandon Mornay, to fight single-handed against the hosts of enemies swarming from every district of France, to assail his acrimonious manifesto. Mornay's first open assailant was the Jesuit casuist, Cahier: he however declined to defend himself against "a monk, a Jesuit, one of a gang pedantic as well as seditious." This scornful retort further incensed men's minds. At length the learned and versatile du Perron, cardinal bishop of Evreux,[1] stood forth as the champion of the Church, and offered to prove that Mornay's celebrated book was a tissue of lying allegations and fraudulent quotations; and that he was ready, on the command of the king, to point out five hundred passages to be false, garbled, and palpable misreadings from the original Greek of the fathers quoted. "This learned bishop is eminent, noble, and greatly esteemed in consistory.

[1] Du Perron was declared cardinal, *in petto*, immediately after the reconciliation of Henri IV. with the Church of Rome. He received his hat in 1604. The pope had so high an opinion of the versatile power of this eminent prelate, that he was heard to say on more than one occasion, "Prions Dieu qu'il inspire le cardinal du Perron, car il nous persuadera tout ce qu'il voudra!" "Je n'avois que 18 ans," writes du Perron, "que je lisois l'Almageste de Ptolomée, et je le lû en 13 jours. J'etudiois, jusques à la pâmoison. J'ai tellement etudié la langue Hebraïque que les conceptions me venoient en Hebreu."

You must not refuse the challenge. To decline is an admission of the charges alleged; and will ever remain a reproach to the reformed churches," said the Sieur de Sainte Marie du Mont, a friend of Mornay's; who, meditating an abjuration of Calvinism, was anxious, on conscientious grounds, to promote the discussion. Mornay, thus adjured by many of his chief co-religionists, felt sorely perplexed. He, however, stoutly maintained the accuracy of his text, and of the doctrine therefrom deduced; but demonstrated unwillingness to accept the challenge of the bishop; or to summon that prelate to prove his allegations. Mornay dreaded the ridicule and power of *chicane* possessed by his assailant; he doubted his ability to wrestle with the learned personages proposed as judges of his literary accuracy; and above all, he descried, in the impatient attitude of the king, a desire to terminate these harassing controversies by the signal humiliation of the aggressor. Henry, however, was resolved upon subjecting Mornay's book to the searching test of his orthodox divines; the king even alluded to the contest with a gleeful malice deeply wounding to the feelings of Mornay. The previous stipulations and wrangles of the combatants occupied a full month; the affair was treated as a matter of state, and various affidavits were made before the chancellor. On the 27th day of April, Duplessis Mornay and his adherents, and the bishop of Evreux and his ecclesiastical colleagues, repaired to Fontainebleau by royal mandate—Henry having resolved that the examination of the famous book should be made in his presence. So certain did Mornay feel of defeat and prejudice, that it was with extreme difficulty he was subsequently restrained from departing secretly from

Fontainebleau. Fear of the displeasure of the king,[1] and of the reproaches of his adherents, at length induced Mornay to submit to the ordeal. The bishop of Evreux, meantime, drew up the terms of the conference, by which he agreed to select sixty quotations from the five hundred assailed, which, with the works of the authors named by Mornay on the margins of his pages, he consented to send to the apartments of the latter on the evening preceding the discussion. This was a great concession on the part of Mornay's opponents; although the decision seemed equitable, that the portions of the work impugned for inaccuracy should be previously indicated. Du Perron, however, was assured of victory. Mornay had written his dissertation on the Eucharist in the spirit of a blind enthusiast, resolved to prove his point at any hazard; rather than as the learned and accurate exponent of the doctrines of the authors cited. The selection of the judges by the king was characterized by greater impartiality than Mornay expected; and certainly, as the former were to examine alone as to the accuracy of the translations and quotations given, and not on matters of doctrine, seven more able and learned men the realm could not produce. The judges were Rosny, the learned Isaac Casaubon, the president and historian de Thou, the advocate Pithou, the witty author of the "Satyre Menippée," M. Martin reader to his majesty, the president de Calignon the friend of queen Jeanne d'Albret, and M. de Fresnes Canaye. M. Martin was a skilled Hebraist; while Casaubon was an authority for Greek text not to be surpassed in

[1] "Le Roy dit qu'il ne partirait pas de Fontainebleau que le defi ne fût terminé, et les 500 passages verifiés, quand même cet examin exigerait deux mois et demi."

Europe. On the morning of the conference the king displayed much excitement. "Sire," exclaimed M. de Loménie, "on the eve of Coutras, Arques, and Ivry, your majesty showed less anxiety!" At this last moment the friends of Mornay would have counselled wisely by advising the latter to decline the conference on the plea of indisposition, an excuse which would have been no subterfuge; for anxiety of mind and anticipation of defeat had so affected the health of Mornay, that since his arrival at Fontainebleau he was never able to leave his chamber. At length the eventful morning of the 4th of May, 1600, dawned. At one o'clock the judges, accompanied by his majesty, by M. d'Evreux, and by the principal ministers and courtiers, entered the saloon beneath the Galerie de François I., which has been since called, in memory of this celebrated assemblage, Salle de la Conference. M. Duplessis Mornay and his friends also presented themselves. The examination of Mornay's book then commenced, the discussion exciting earnest interest. The debate was conducted with ability and conciliation. Nineteen passages[1] alone were submitted to the learned scrutiny of the judges, on the appeal of du Perron. The authorities quoted were first read aloud, and then compared with the text given by Mornay: no matter concerning doctrine was debated, except when it became necessary to show that Mornay had quoted an objection purposely raised by the reverend divine, and affirmed such to be the theological solution of the writer.

[1] The authors, quoted by Mornay in the 19 passages, were John Duns Scotus, the monk Durandus of Fecamp, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Cyril, St. Bernard, epistle 174 on the Virgin Mary, and Theodoret on images in churches.

After an investigation, which lasted several hours, the judges pronounced that the bishop of Evreux had proved his case; and that in everyone of the nineteen passages examined Mornay had mistranslated, or had failed to understand, the true bearing of the original, "he having frequently taken the objection to a question for its solution."[1] Cruelly humbled, Mornay retired to his apartment. By the advice of his friends he declined to renew the conferences on the morrow; for the *dicta* of such learned personages famed for their classical repute afforded no possibility for protest. Mornay's assumption of the office of theological teacher, for which his previous career disqualified him, inflicted great damage on the reformed churches of France. The subsequent synods holden during this reign issued their acts in doubt and perplexity; while no fresh champion of the churches publicly avenged the defeat of Fontainebleau. Rosny states, that he always distrusted Mornay's classical and theological capability; "such acquirements require long study to treat ably with the pen, or to discuss," observes this sage minister. Great friendship always existed between du Perron and Rosny; and the former had addressed a private letter to Rosny, to inform him of the glaring literary inaccuracy of the work paraded as a rule of faith by Mornay and his friends. "Would, Monseigneur, that I might see you obey the canons of the Church, you who now command all the cannons of France!" wrote the witty prelate in the long epistle he addressed to Rosny.[2] "Well! what do

[1] "Mornay se defendit si faiblement, qu'il faisoit rire les uns, mettoit les autres en colère, et faisoit pitié aux autres," writes Sully.—Mém. liv. 11ème.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. No. 1644. Rosny sent back a

you say now to your pope?" asked his majesty, addressing Rosny at the termination of the *séance* in the Salle de la Conference." "Sire! that M. de Mornay is a better pope than ever; for has he not given the red hat to M. d'Evreux? If our faith had no better foundation than M. de Mornay and his arms folded in the shape of a cross, I would abjure this instant." The king wrote the same evening to the duke d'Epernon. The flippant style of this letter, which was made public by Epernon, deeply wounded Mornay, and Henry's old friends and subjects, the Huguenots of the realm.

"Mon amy," wrote king Henry, "the diocess of Evreux has beaten that of Saumur! The indulgence shown to all (the combatants) must prevent any Huguenot from asserting hereafter that force of any kind was used, except the power of Truth. The bearer of this was present, and will recount to you the wonders which I achieved. Certes, this is one of the greatest events for the prosperity of the Church of God that has happened for a long interval: and by continuing the same course, we shall restore more aliens from the Church in one year, than by other means we might win in fifty. *Bonsoir, mon amy;* knowing the pleasure this news will give you, you are the only personage to whom I have notified the event."[1]

hard sceptical reply: "J'espere que vos desirs monseigneur, en mon endroit seront accomplis aux siècles à venir. Venez me voir dans mon nouveau menage je vous en conjure" (the Arsenal) "et prenez asseurance que vous n'aurez jamais une brebis (sans vous croire) plus devotieuse que je vous serez toute ma vie."—MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr.

[1] Mém. de Duplessis Mornay—Liqnes et Charlotte Arbaleste. "Le Roy à dit depuis à Casaubon que la femme de M. de Mornay, dame fière et haute de la main, etoit cause du malheur de son mari; et qu'elle lui avait fait faire un faux pas de son ambition."—MS. Bibl. Imp. No. 1644.

The known dislike which Henry bore towards Epernon rendered the object of this epistle still more mysterious: as elation for the humiliation of his old friend Mornay never could, it was alleged, have betrayed the king into expressions of spontaneous attachment towards his late rebellious subject. Mornay retired to Saumur, where he solaced his chagrin in the society of his faithful and tender consort, Charlotte Arbaleste; and by writing numerous letters and manifestoes. Amongst other epistles, Mornay addressed one to Madame, who was living *en penitence* in the palace of Nancy deserted by her husband, and in disgrace with his father the duke of Lorraine. Mornay does not attempt to palliate the triumph of his enemies. He says, that out of 5,000 quotations 500 were assailed. Of these 500 sixty were chosen, of which the accuracy of nineteen was tested. He consoles himself by the example of Madame; who, Mornay says, chose to suffer with the elect of God, rather than taste of royal dainties and delights.[1]

Preparations for the ensuing campaign against the duke de Savoye had not suffered momentary relaxation by the negotiation relative to Henry's marriage; nor by the interest excited by the conferences at Fontainebleau. Opinion was divided in the cabinet. Rosny hurried on preparation—a policy which entailed resolute opposition from the chancellor Bellièvre; who accused the new grand-master of promoting a war to exhibit his skill in organizing an army. Rosny contemptuously replied, "that the duke of Savoy was a traitor, who had signed a promise he never meant to fulfil: that the said duke had now no allies; he therefore preferred to attack him at once,

[1] Journal de Henri IV. Mém. de Sully, liv. 9ème. Mathieu Hist. du Regne de Henri IV.

and compel the execution of the treaty of Vervins." The clamour of mademoiselle d'Entragues and her kindred, that the king should repair to Paris to be present at her *accouchement*, was likewise a secret motive, which instigated the energy of M. de Rosny. Henry, however, at this period was very providentially released from this serious dilemma. At the end of the month of June, 1600, various districts of France were visited by terrific thunder-storms. On the 2nd of July the steeple of St. Germain l'Auxerrois was struck by lightning, during a storm which raged over the metropolis for nine hours. The hotel of mademoiselle d'Entragues was situated in the vicinity of the church, and her alarm was excessive. As Henriette lay trembling on her bed, the lightning struck some object standing close to the window within her chamber, and set a curtain on fire. Her consequent agitation and terror brought on premature labour; and during the day she gave birth to a still-born son. An express was despatched to Moulins to summon the king. It was pretended that Henriette having performed the condition stipulated in the promise of marriage given by the king—she having given birth to "a dauphin" within the prescribed period—Henry was bound, as a loyal and honourable prince, to redeem his pledge and consecrate the union by the benison of Holy Church. Rosny combated this asseveration with the liveliest ridicule, insisting that king Henry had at least stipulated for "a living dauphin!" The king, after some hesitation, listened and agreed to the representations of his faithful minister, who besought his master to avoid a shameful rupture of his Tuscan engagement by continuing his journey to Lyons. The king wrote affectionately to his mistress, and sent her a deed of donation of the castle

and lands of Verneuil, promising to erect the domain into a marquisate in her favour. The king wrote to Bellièvre, commanding that the patent might be prepared, and forwarded for his signature. This bounty soothed, though it did not appease the furious resentment of Madame de Verneuil. As soon as she was able to travel, the new marchioness set out to join the king, hoping yet to frustrate his intended marriage; while her public allusions to the queen-elect became so offensive as to compel the interposition of the Tuscan envoy, Giovannini.[1]

[1] The king met madame de Verneuil at St. André de la Côte. Accompanied by Bassompierre, Henry rode to greet his mistress, who was on her road to Grenoble. The meeting was at first stormy. "Le roi s'en voulait retourner de colère, et me dit. Bassompierre, que l'on fasse seller nos chevaux!" The adroit courtier, however, entreated his majesty's patience, and successfully mediated between the angry disputants.—Journal de ma Vie—année 1600.

CHAPTER II.

1600.

Correspondence between Henri Quatre and Marie de Medici—Arrival of ambassadors from Savoy at Lyons—Their prevarications—Henry declares war against the duke of Savoy, and his generals invade the ducal territories—The marshal de Biron—His discontent and intrigues—Policy of Philip III.—Success of the royal arms—Fall of the towns of Montmellian, Bourg, and Chambéry—Negotiations of the patriarch Calatagirone—Response of the king—Treasonable relations of Biron—His correspondence with Fuentes—Henry visits the camp of the marshal before Bourg—Conference with Biron—Regicidal projects of the latter—Correspondence between Henri IV. and Marie de Medici—Progress of the campaign—Intrigues of madame de Verneuil—Affairs in Rome—Interview of cardinal d'Ossat with Clement VIII.—The latter offers his mediation—Entry of the duke de Bellegarde into Florence—Reception of the legate Aldobrandini—His address to the princess Marie—Marriage by proxy of Henri IV. with Marie de Medici—Sumptuous festivities—Eleonore Dori—She changes her name to Galigai—Concino Concini—His parentage—Departure of queen Marie from Florence—She embarks at Leghorn—Voyage and reception at Marseilles—Details—She refuses the attendance of her French ladies—Sojourn in Marseilles—Her resolution and uneasiness—Bids farewell, to the duchesses of Tuscany and Mantua—Her entry into Avignon—Progress

of the campaign—The cardinal-legate Aldobrandini confers with the condé de Fuentes and with the duke of Savoy—His journey to Chambéry, and reception by king Henry—Siege of fort Ste. Catherine—Entry of queen Marie into Lyons—Feuds and dissensions of her suite—Madame de Verneuil—Her letter to the king—Arrival of Henri Quatre in Lyons—Interview with his bride—Marriage solemnities—Stormy dissensions between the king and queen relative to the appointment of the household—Concern of the grand-duke—The cavaliere Vinta remonstrates with Marie—Her reply and displeasure.

During Henry's sojourn at Moulins, M. de Frontenac returned from Florence, bringing the answer of the princess Marie to her royal affianced. The grand-duchess Christine sent also a letter of congratulation to the king, with a portrait of the princess, attired in French fashion, by the painter of Vicenza, Giovanni Antonio Fasolo. This celebrated portrait, which now hangs in the Dresden Gallery, is that prefixed to this volume. The portrait delighted the king, who spoke in such terms of the beauty of his future consort as to raise hopes of the speedy downfall of the favourite. Henry hastened to reply to Marie's epistle. "Frontenac, madame, has given me such a description of your perfections, that I not only love you as a husband, but cherish you with the devotion which the most passionate lover owes to his mistress. This title I shall give you until you arrive at Marseilles, when you will exchange it for a more honourable name. I shall avail myself of every opportunity to write to you, in order to assure you that my warmest desire is to behold you by my side. Believe this, *ma maitresse*; and that every month of delay is to me as a century! I have received this morning from you a letter written in French; if you have composed it without assistance, you are already

expert in our tongue." [1] After writing these words, which probably were sincerely felt as they flowed from his pen, Henry on the same day addressed madame de Verneuil, and prayed her to hasten her recovery, so that she might join him with as little delay as possible at the mineral baths of Pougues in Nivernois! When Henry gave this invitation, it appeared likely that timely concession by the duke de Savoye might avert the menaced campaign. On the 16th of July Henry made his entry into Lyons, where he found the marquis de Lullins, M. de Roncas, and the archbishop of the Tarentaise. These ambassadors assured the king that their master meant to satisfy his majesty; nevertheless, the duke was deeply moved at the hardship of the terms imposed, but would surrender the marquisate provided that Henry conferred its investiture on the second son of Savoye! This pertinacity the king deemed an affront. "The duke wrote to me from Turin and from Chambéry, that he was pleased with our compact of Paris. His highness has given me no reason to favour his house that I should give the territory of France to his son. I will make no concession; and demand my marquisate, or the surrender of the territory stipulated as its equivalent," [2] sharply retorted the king. Roncas, therefore, asked permission to confer with his master, to certify that the

[1] MS. Archives de Florence, vol. 2.—Lettres Missives de Henri IV.—Berger de Xivrey. The first French book perused by the princess after her betrothal was "Clorinde ou L'Amante tuée par son amant," from Tasso.

[2] Zilioli—Guerra tra Enrico IV. è Carlo Emanuele duca di Savoia per il marchesato de Saluzzo—Venetia, 1602.—Cayet. Chron. Septennaire—Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale maison de Savoye.

royal troops would cross the frontier into Savoy on the first of August unless the king's demands were conceded. Meantime, a gentleman of the household, M. de Montmorency Fosseuse, on his return from Italy, passed through Turin on his road to Lyons. He informed Henry that the general opinion in that capital was, that Saluzzo would not be surrendered; that the negotiations pending were only feints to gain time to organize a plan of campaign, in conjunction with the Milanese viceroy; who was supposed to hold intelligences with certain disaffected but puissant subjects of his Christian majesty.[1] The king paid little attention to this important notification; but maintained that the duke would not dare to risk a campaign, when he beheld the detachments under Biron and Lesdiguières on his frontier. Roncas, meantime, returned from Turin, after an absence of three days, with the assurance that the duke would sign and execute a treaty conformable with the compact of Paris, greatly to the triumph of his majesty. Sillery and Jeannin were, therefore, empowered to confer with the ambassadors; and to concert measures for the amicable but immediate surrender of the marquisate; their instructions being to consider in every possible manner the convenience and honour of M. de Savoye. The articles previously agreed upon underwent diligent revision; the French ministers yielding every point which interfered not with the basis of the treaty—the restitution of Saluzzo, or the surrender of territory its equivalent. Henry signed the articles; but when the turn of the duke's ambassadors came, they

[1] "Le duc disait que jamais il ne rendrait le marquisat de Saluces; et que si on l'attaquoit a force ouverte ce seroit une guerre à durer 40 ans."—De Thou, liv. 125.

confessed, after much equivocation, that they had no power to imitate his majesty; but were instructed to convey the treaty to Turin for the previous inspection of their master. This trifling opened the king's eyes:[1] "If by the 16th of August this treaty is not executed, I will try, messieurs, to do myself justice; meantime, M. de Passage, the lieutenant whom I intend to nominate over Saluzzo will proceed in the direction of Carmagnola, so as to enter that place without delay, so soon as your duke shall have ratified our treaty." Pending the resolution of the court of Turin, Henry quitted Lyons and repaired for a few days to Pougues, where madame de Verneuil gave him rendezvous. Rosny, meantime, worked at the organization of the forces for the campaign: siege trains of unusual strength —proper for the storming of the duke's mountain-strongholds—daily arrived in Lyons; and boats laden with ammunition and stores were sent down the Rhône. Montmorency was summoned to join the royal standard; Biron, governor of Burgundy, held his troops in readiness to cross the frontiers of the county of Bresse; while Lesdiguières and his *corps d'armée* of Provence prepared to act promptly in Savoy on the first signal.

On the return of king Henry to Lyons, he again addressed the princess Marie as follows:—

[1] "Mon ami," wrote king Henry to Rosny, "je suis bien trompé quelque mine que facent ces gens icy, ils ne nous veulent tromper et gagner temps."—Lettres Missives, t. 5. Mém. de Sully, No. 11. To the constable, Henry says: "Les gens du duc de Savoye n'ont voulu signer les articles sans renvoyer vers leur maistre, par ou j'ai reconnu qu'ils ne veulent que gagner temps."—Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth, MS. 9080.

A Madame la Princesse de Toscane.

"MA MAITRESSE—I have just received a letter from you through Giovannini, which has given me pleasure, and I pray you to favour me thus as often as you can. The duke of Savoy has played artful tricks hitherto; but I have now driven him to the end of his tether; so that if in eight days I am not satisfied, the next letter you receive from me will be dated in Chambéry. The hope of this said duke tends always to do me malicious detriment; but God will preserve me for you, and for the welfare of my subjects. I have been drinking the waters at Pougues, from which I have benefited. As you recommend to me the care of my health, I commend to you the preservation of your own; so that after your arrival God may bless us with beautiful offspring, to the joy of our friends, and the confusion of our foes. Frontenac tells me that you desire patterns of our fashions in dress. I send you, therefore, some model dolls; and in the suite of M. le Grand [1] I will despatch to you a skilful tailor. You see I begin to address you with freedom; imitate me, for we are now united by a bond which death can alone sever. Condescend, *ma belle maitresse*, to send me a knot of ribbon; for from your hand will I alone accept any favour during this campaign. I conclude with this petition, which I pray you grant. I kiss your beautiful hand a hundred thousand times. This 24th of July, at Lyons." [2]

This letter was accompanied by another to the grand-duke, stating the king's intention relative to the celebration of his marriage by proxy. Henry announced the intended departure of the duke de Bellegarde for Florence; who was to be the bearer

[1] The duke de Bellegarde Grand Ecuyer.

[2] MS. Archives de Florence, vol. 2. Lettres Missives de Henri IV.—Berger Xivrey, t. 5.

of the royal procuration, so soon as the probable length of the campaign in Savoy could be determined.

On the 7th of August Henry received positive proof of the insincerity of the duke's intentions. M. de Passage, on approaching the passes which led to Carmagnola, received notice "to advance at his peril;"[1] for his highness had no intention to cede his marquisate of Saluzzo. The patience of the king was now thoroughly exhausted: a declaration of war was therefore issued by his majesty, and the same night the marshal de Biron entered the county of Bresse; and Lesdiguières marched upon the town of Montmellian, the citadel of which was regarded as the bulwark of the duchy.

The uncertain and dishonourable conduct of M. de Savoye proceeded from two sources—his intense disinclination to cede the territory of Saluzzo; and his malicious pleasure in thwarting the king. The unsatisfactory attitude of the cabinet of Madrid, in alliance with which duke Charles could alone hope to resist the arms of Henri-Quatre, had increased this vacillation. The duke of Lerma was a man of peace, and desired to consolidate his fortune, and that of his relatives: he hated Fuentes as the most able statesman of Spain, and consequently his formidable rival. Nevertheless, the arms of Henri Quatre menaced Italy: and Lombardy and Naples, the ancient heritage of the houses of Anjou and Orléans, might eventually be menaced by the conqueror of Savoy, in alliance with the Venetian and Tuscan states. The Spaniards, moreover, protested against the ces-

[1] "Le duc lui fit dire de ne pas avancer; et d'etre persuadé que s'il vouloit entrer dans la place, il faudroit qu'il s'y ouvrit un passage les armes à la main."

sion of the territory proposed as an equivalent for Saluzzo. The annexation of the county of Bresse to the French crown closed the route hitherto opened to the Spanish army when it became necessary to repress the risings in their possessions in the Low Countries. Although these rich provinces had been ceded to the Infanta, yet Philip III. pondered over the mysterious clause in his father's will, which reminded him "that numerous opportunities might occur to afford pretext, skilfully to despoil Doña Isabel of her heritage." The traitorous communications of the duke de Biron also conveyed the impression that Henry would be unable to continue the campaign; and that risings were likely to occur in the south-western provinces of the realm, which would render his majesty eager to patch up temporary peace with Savoy. The seizure of a few Savoyard towns by the French, meantime, suited the ulterior views of the subtle schemers; inasmuch as to recover such would form a plausible pretext for the sudden invasion of the realm by a Spanish army, when France was convulsed by the promised machinations of Biron and his fellow traitors. The disposition of Biron was deemed propitious: the marshal, though he had not yet compromised himself by written communications to the courts of Madrid and Milan, manifested capricious discontent; and an impatience which, it was hoped, the slightest provocation from his royal master might fan into actual treason. Lafin, the agent of the marshal, had had a recent interview at Milan with Fuentes: after declaring that he spoke from his own observation and knowledge of the mind of M. de Biron, Lafin stated, "that the latter intended to restore the sway of his Catholic majesty over France; that king Henry

favoured heresy, and that the house of Bourbon was ever ready to barter faith for empire." Lafin explained that M. de Biron must be permitted to take his measures leisurely; and in order the better to circumvent the designs of his majesty, it was requisite that he should retain his command over the armies of France. The monk Picotté proceeded to Madrid and made the same avowals.[1] Lerma, therefore, engaged to support the policy of the condé de Fuentes; and confirmed, in the name of Philip III., the promise made by the viceroy, and the duke of Savoy—that the guerdon of M. de Biron should be, the sovereignty of Burgundy, and marriage with a daughter of Savoy; or with the archduchess, sister of the queen of Spain. It is doubtful whether Biron realized the magnitude of the designs developed in these overtures. His fiery temper, indiscreet tongue, and inordinate vanity, were as easy to soothe as to excite. It was constantly his habit to break forth into unbecoming language relative to the ingratitude of the king, in the presence even of the austere Rosny. "This sword placed the king on his throne; it can as easily unmake him!" exclaimed the marshal one day on concluding a fierce diatribe against the government. The king, on being informed of this speech, treated it as a "gasconnade;" and spoke of the unlucky temper of *ce pauvre Biron*, who, his majesty said, always expressed more than he intended; but who, in reality, was a very loyal servant.[2]

Meantime, the malevolent calculations of the foes

[1] De Thou, liv. 125. Mém. de Sully. Mathieu—Hist. du Regne de Henri IV. Nani—Historia de la Republica de Venetia, lib. 1. Cabrera—Felipe II.

[2] Mathieu, t. 2. Sully, liv. 12ème.

of France were disappointed by the victories of the royal lieutenants. On the 15th of August, Biron assaulted and took the town of Bourg, the capital of the county of Bresse; and siege was laid to the citadel. The marshal despatched an express to notify this success to his majesty, and to lay at Henry's feet seven captured standards; also, Biron supplicated his majesty to bestow upon him the command of Bourg when the citadel capitulated. The same day, the Feast of the Assumption, tidings arrived of the fall of the town of Montmellian, captured by the brave Créquy, son-in-law of the marshal de Lesdiguières; while Crillon seized the town of Chambéry, the capital of the duchy.[1] The rapid conquest of his chief towns filled the duke with dismay; it was true that the citadels of Bourg, Montmellian, and Chambéry remained to be reduced; but with the artillery at the enemy's command, their surrender was but a question of time. A *Te Deum* was sung in the cathedral of Grenoble for the signal success of the royal arms, at which Henry was present. On leaving the church after vespers, the king was surprised by a demand for audience from the Patriarch of Constantinople, Calatagirone, in the name of his holiness Pope Clement. By command of the pontiff the patriarch for some time past had taken up his abode in the Franciscan monastery at Turin, to watch events; and to interpose at any moment the mediation of the supreme father of Christendom.[2] Clement viewed the outbreak of hostilities with unmitigated consternation and disgust. The royal envoys in Rome, especially

[1] Lettre du Roy au connétable datée ce mercredi 4 du soir 16ème Aoust, au Fort de Bairault.—Lettres Missives, t. 5, Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth., MS. 9079.

[2] Calatagirone arrived on the 17th of August.

d'Ossat, were wearied with the daily plaints of his holiness. Clement accused the king of ambitious intents, and of a project never to restore Savoy when conquered. He complained that Henry systematically refused to make concessions agreeable to the Holy See, though he had befriended the king on every occasion. Calatagirone, therefore, earnestly implored the king to stay his victorious arms; to adhere to the treaty of Vervins; not to annex Savoy to his crown; but again to open negotiations, through the Holy See, with duke Charles. Henry replied, that he willingly promised to adhere to the treaty of Vervins; but would enter into no fresh negotiations with M. de Savoye. "Will your majesty consent to an armistice while the legate of his holiness intervenes?" "No," responded Henry; "I will not again subject myself to the mocking gibes of M. de Savoye I know that the latter is in negotiation for a Spanish succour—I will therefore forestall him, and recover the territory which his highness has usurped."[1] The apathy which had hitherto been evinced by the duke, who beheld the fall of fortress after fortress without sending succours to aid the garrisons assailed, confirmed the suspicion that Fuentes and Spanish legions were hastening to his rescue. "The king has seized a few of my passes and villages; but I shall soon be master of the most flourishing towns in France," was the boast of duke Charles. "Forty years shall not suffice to obliterate from France traces of the revenge I mean to take!" A council was holden about this period at Asti between the duke, the condé de Fuentes, and the ex-governor of Milan the constable Velasco. The latter, having a whole-

[1] Chron. Septennaire—Cayet. De Thou, liv. 125. Sully Mém. Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat—Lettre 243.

some dread of the prowess of the king, had no desire, however, to challenge his majesty to a second campaign. Fresh resolutions were taken in promotion of the intrigue to tempt Biron from his allegiance; and the plan of a grand campaign, to be conducted by Fuentes, for the spring of 1601, was discussed and ratified.[1]

The king repaired to Chambéry on the 23rd day of August, in time to receive the capitulation of the citadel. The following day Henry accepted the submission of the town of Conflans. The king was joined in Chambéry by Rosny and his wife. The activity of Rosny was indefatigable; and during this campaign his military knowledge astonished the most experienced officers. Often he persisted in asserting the expediency of some military manœuvre, in defiance of the opinion expressed by the king. M. de Villeroy, the count de Soissons, and the duke d'Epernon, especially resented the freedom of remark conceded to the favoured minister. Rosny's mind was also distressed at this period by the growing discontent manifested throughout France at the tax nicknamed "La Pancarte," or *le sou pour livre*, against the imposition of which he had vainly protested at the assembly of Notables held at Rouen in 1597. He, moreover, had the arrangement of the ceremonial to be observed on the marriage of the king; with the ordering of the embassage for Florence. By the command of the king, Rosny also paid a visit to the camp of Biron before Bourg. Painful rumours of the marshal's disaffection continued to disturb the king. It was reported that the duke

[1] Ibid.—Zilioli Guerra trà Enrico IV. e Carlo Emanuele, in 4to. Venetia, 1602.—Continuation des Chroniques de Nicole Gilles.

had expressed resentment that he was intrusted only with siege operations, while Lesdiguières carried the war into Savoy. "The king is a Calvinist—he loves only Huguenots—witness the favour bestowed on MM. de Rosny and Lesdiguières," said Biron. Rosny, however, discovered no failure of duty on the part of the marshal; but he accuses the duke of a design to betray him into the hands of the Spaniards—a scheme frustrated alone by Rosny's own perception and alacrity in leaving the town of Villars, where an ambuscade waited to effect his capture. Rosny next proceeded to Lyons; his errand being to superintend the transport of siege batteries and ammunition for the reduction of the fort of Charbonnières, which commanded the passes of the Maurienne. This castle was the cradle of the ducal house of Savoy, being the stronghold of Berault Saxon, first count of Maurienne, founder of the race. The conduct of this siege devolved upon Rosny, in his capacity of grand-master of artillery. The fortress was considered impregnable; it was surrounded by lofty rocks and narrow defiles, and its only approach was by a winding and precipitous path. At the foot of the rock on one side was the hamlet of Aiguebelle; on the other flowed the river Isère. Rosny's skilful disposition of the batteries, and the obstacles overcome by his zeal and intrepidity, soon rendered the king master of Charbonnières.[1] The garrison capitu-

[1] "Le fort de Charbonnières pris, M. de Savoye peut bien faire le signe de la croix sur le dos à Montmellian et à tout le duché de Savoye. Envoyés moi des bons melons, des muscats, des figues, et des perseques: car icy nous n'avons aucun fruit. Ce dernier Aoust au camp de Charbonnières."—Lettre du roy au Connétable—Lettres Missives—Berger de Xivrey, t. 5.

lated on the 2nd of September, 1600. A division of the army, meantime, had been despatched under Lesdiguières to achieve the conquest of the duchy. The marshal triumphantly swept the ducal garrisons from their mountain strongholds: no resistance was attempted. St. Jean de Maurienne, the forts of Briançon and Jacomont, capitulated; so that by the second week in September there only remained to the duke the citadels of Bourg and Montmellian, and the fort of Ste. Catherine—a stronghold erected about six miles from Geneva, in order to awe and control the heretical inhabitants of that famed city. The king left French garrisons in all the captured forts, and fixed his head-quarters in Chambéry. Lesdiguières then sat down before the fortress of Montmellian, which was regarded as the grand stronghold of these Alpine solitudes. The garrison was valiant and select,[1] and commanded by Jacques de Rivolles Count de Brandis, who had the repute of being an able soldier, and a faithful adherent of the house of Savoy. The siege of Bourg, meantime, was carried on slowly and with unequal success. M. de Bouvens, governor of the garrison, was a formidable opponent, especially to so lukewarm an enemy as Biron. Indeed, the marshal was accused of secret intelligences with Bouvens, to the extent of betraying to him the plan of any meditated assault, so that it might be frustrated by the garrison. The formal refusal of the king to confer upon the marshal the command of this citadel when captured, seems to have utterly alienated the duke, so as to render him sub-

[1] "Le Sieur de Lesdiguières estime Montmellian grandement fort, et qui neantmoins nous le pourrons prendre ayant 20 canons, et de quoy tirer 8000 coups."—Lettre du roy à M. de Rosny—Mém., liv. 11.

servient to the machinations of the enemies of France. From this period date those treasonable communications to the duke of Savoy and to Philip III. which subsequently proved so disastrous to Biron. These papers were addressed and confided to Lafin, for transmission to Fuentes, by whom they were sent to Madrid. Any individual base enough to undertake the mission of Lafin was certain to prove a traitor to the master he feigned to serve. Lafin, therefore, before delivering these papers, took a copy, which he carefully preserved, to use as opportunity dictated. Biron, in the first sheet containing "the ideas" which he thus committed to paper, counsels the duke of Savoye on the means best calculated to divert the arms of France; to save the remaining fortresses of Savoy from assault; and to embarrass the king's tenure of those already captured. He advises the duke to march suddenly upon Chambéry, during any absence of the king, and while Lesdiguières was occupied with the siege of Montmellian; and suggests that troops should be enlisted for this purpose in Luxembourg, and in the county of Feretta. The marshal next enumerates the most efficient regiments in the royal service, and comments on their probable destination: he proves that the king's finances were in such a condition as to render a tedious war impossible; he counsels a compact with Spain, and the proclamation of such alliance, as being likely to produce throughout France results highly advantageous to the views of his Catholic majesty. M. Renazé the secretary of Lafin was moreover initiated into the secret of the conspirators.[1] Henry, though warned

[1] De Thou, liv. 128, 125. Sully, liv. 11, 12ème. Perefixe — Procès du maréchal de Biron. At his trial, as will be seen, Biron acknowledged that he had written the communications to the

by Rosny and others, that the duke's allegiance had been tampered with, refused to believe that his old friend and servant could act or speak against him, except when under the influence of a mad ebullition of temper. Henry, therefore, determined himself to visit the camp of Bourg, and judge of the dispositions of the marshal. His majesty conferred the command-in-chief of the camp before Montmellian, on the Count de Soissons; as one of the griefs of Biron was the alleged usurpation by Lesdiguières of his office of *maréchal général des armées du roi.* No particulars of this interview exist, except that Henry, with unparalleled generosity, frankly imparted to Biron the suspicions engendered by his conduct; and informed the latter that his own imprudent demonstrations had prevented him from being sent on active service against an enemy with whom he was reported to be in league. Henry advised Biron to discard Lafin;[1] his majesty averred that the treacherous character of the latter was known. "Let him not approach you, mon ami," said the king, "he is pestilent."[2] Biron, however, denied all; and ironically assured the king that he had been deceived. Henry again warned the marshal, adding, "that crimes committed against the welfare of nations could not be condoned by the largest amount of private friendship." The frankness of the king, instead of penetrating the heart of the duke, seems to have had rather an exasperating effect. Henry next mentioned his desire to recon-

duke de Savoy produced.—Lettre du Roy à M. de Fresnes Archives de M. de Lusignan.

[1] "Sa majesté qui aymoit le maréchal, luy dit qu'il ostast la Fin d'auprès de lui, ou qu'il l'affineroit."—Cayet—Chron. Septennaire.

[2] Péréfixe—Vie de Henri le Grand.

noitre the fort Ste. Catherine, in the vicinity of Geneva, before he returned to Chambéry. Biron professed readiness to attend his royal master. The suspicions, however, infused into the mind of Biron by the remonstrances of the king, determined the latter to attempt the perpetration of a crime which might afford extrication from the personal peril he now apprehended from the fears, or the resentment of his sovereign. This fact is attested at the subsequent trial of M. de Biron; it is difficult, however, to believe in the possibility of so perfidious a design, though quickly repented of, to compass the destruction of so indulgent a master. It was deposed that on ascertaining the royal intentions Biron summoned Renazé, and intrusted him with a despatch to the governor of Fort Ste. Catherine; in this missive the marshal advertised the latter of the king's visit, and counselled him to mount a battery in a position which he indicated. Biron then engaged to bring the king within range of these guns. Renazé stated that he remonstrated, and at first declined to abet so wicked a deed. "Such shall be the fate of a man who aims at my life, and at the life of Lafin; and who now is even compassing our destruction. Silence! let us act, and not dispute!" fiercely rejoined the marshal.[1] The treacherous design was therefore planned and partially executed. The king unsuspiciously yielded himself to the guidance of Biron; but the heart of the latter failed him when in sight of the place of ambuscade. Biron then suddenly seized the bridle of the king's horse, and, with agitation, implored his majesty not to advance further in the direction of the enemy's trenches, as in the garrison

[1] De Thou, liv. 128. Sully—Vie et mort du maréchal de Biron—Paris, 1603.

there was an expert gunner, who never missed his aim. Biron subsequently denied the accusation: he stated that he had never accompanied the king to survey the Fort Ste. Catherine; but on the contrary, had persuaded his majesty, when at Bourg, from making so rash an expedition. The truth of this accusation was assuredly known to the king; and while allowing every latitude of exaggeration to the witnesses at a trial for high treason in the seventeenth century, when the latter were deeply compromised, yet Henry would scarcely have allowed evidence so aggravated to be received, knowing that the allegation was altogether false.[1] The king afterwards returned to Chambéry, having, as he hoped, confirmed Biron in his fealty; solaced his pride by the honour of the visit; and by his friendly advice checked the fatal passion for gaming, which the duke carried to such excess as to be always thereby impoverished. After notable loss at play the duke's disloyalty glowed fiercely; as he was then in the habit of accusing the king of neglect, forgetting how munificently his services had been rewarded.

King Henry's correspondence with the princess Marie, and with other illustrious personages, continued throughout the siege operations which characterize this campaign. The king writes to the princess on establishing his head-quarters at Chambéry,

[1] "Le dict Biron," writes the king, "avoit avec M. de Savoye une telle correspondence qu'il était adverty par luy non seulement de ce que je faisois, mais aussy de ce que je pensois et projetois de faire. Or si Dieu n'eust eu plus de soin de moy et de mon royaume, que moy même, je me fusse perdu plusieurs fois en la dicte guerre, avec ceux qui m'assistoient."—Lettre du Roy à M. de Fresnes Canaye.—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

especially to inform her of the departure of the duke de Bellegarde for Florence; and that a Tuscan courier had been arrested by the emissaries of the duke of Savoy. "I have means at my disposal to chastise the said duke for this insolent enterprise; but not the power to compensate to myself for a delay of eight days, which must now elapse before I can again hear news of you." As for the progress of this war, God prospers my righteous cause: I have kept my promise to you, madame, for it is from Chambéry that I date this letter." The next day Henry addresses the princess to apprize her that the duke of Savoy had gallantly set her courier at liberty. The princess sent her betrothed lord the knot of favours which he had solicited. "I thank you, *ma belle maitresse*, for your present; I will attach it to my helmet, and should we come to open fight, all my thrusts shall be given in honour of you. I know well that you would dispense with such a testimony of affection, but a soldier on the field cannot be guided by the wishes of any woman. I have never before been inspired with so violent a desire to see anybody as yourself. Let this fact, *ma belle maitresse*, serve as a spur to hasten your arrival." In another letter, dated September 14, Henry recapitulates the triumphs of the campaign; and urges the princess to leave Florence so soon as her marriage by proxy had been accomplished. A constant interchange of letters and presents continued between the royal pair from the date of their betrothal. In return for the gift of an emerald chain of great value, Marie sent the king a charger, richly caparisoned. The horse was conveyed to Marseilles on board one of the grand-ducal galleys, and was received by an officer sent especially by his majesty.

Henry wrote the following letter of acknowledgment:

A Madame la Princesse de Toscane.[1]

"I return you a thousand thanks for the present that you have made me. You could not have bestowed the gift at a more welcome opportunity; for neither gold nor silver can here procure a good horse. I have sent for the horse from Marseilles; and being your gift, madame, he will bring me fortune. Since the despatch of my last letter, I have taken Charbonnières, and all the fortresses of the Maurienne: and my army has now deployed in the valley of la Tarentaise, and by the grace of God will reduce that district in six days.[2] We encounter none of the people of the duke of Savoye. The county of Bresse, excepting the fort of Bourg, is mine: Pierre-Châtel was reduced about the 12th of this month. The prince de Conty, the count de Soissons, the count d'Auvergne, and Monsieur d'Epernon, have arrived in camp: in short, all France hastens under my banner: enemies alone fail us. You will hear especially of me from M. le Grand (duke de Bellegarde), who will arrive when you receive this. I kiss your beautiful hands. This 16th day of September, from Grenoble."

The royal impatience and excitement relative to

[1] Archives Florentines, vol. 2. Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

[2] The king says in a previous letter: "Je tiens un fort assiégé qui est bon et bien guarni; mais j'espére avec l'aide de Dieu en estre le maitre cette semaine. Il ferme la vallée de la Mauriénne. Cela fait, toute la Savoye et la Bresse sont à moi, fors les citadelles de Bourg, Montmellian et Fort Ste. Catherine. Cependant je fais nouvelles levées de Suisses et de François pour rendre mon armée de 20,000 hommes de pied, et de 2,500 chevaux. S'il etait bienséant de dire qu'on est amoureux de sa femme je vous dirois que je le suis extrêmement de vous."—Le roy à madame le princesse de Toscane.—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

the princess astonished Rosny, and Henry's intimate *entourage*. His majesty never wearied of expatiating on the comely features and majestic presence of the queen-elect; and was heard often to execrate the bad faith of the duke of Savoye, which postponed his nuptials. The king nevertheless was sufficiently alive to the peril likely to ensue from the discontent of the duke de Biron, to comprehend the policy of remaining in camp until the conclusion of the campaign. The emissaries of duke Charles prowled everywhere; the pope was highly offended at the onslaught made by the king on the dominions of Savoy: and it was now ascertained that money had been transmitted from Madrid to Fuentes for the defence of the Italian dominions of the duke. Indeed, the viceroy positively proclaimed the intention of the Spanish government to oppose the invasion of Piedmont. The duke waited for such event; and therefore beheld with indifference the capture of the duchy. M. de Savoye hoped to avenge his disgrace, when in alliance with the Spaniards his army might make descent into France; and there, aided by the insurrectionary movements promoted by Biron, reorganize that formidable League, which had originally enabled him to usurp the marquisate of Saluzzo.

Henry's *empressement* for his bride-elect did not, however, prevent constant epistolary communication with madame de Verneuil, who was sojourning at Lyons. On the fall of Charbonnières, Henry sent the captured standards to his mistress.[1] Henriette caused the banners to be publicly exhibited, and

[1] "Mon compère: J'envoye à madame la marquise de Verneuil 4 enseignes qui étoient dedans le fort de Charbonnières." —Lettre du Roy à Montmorency. MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth. 9080. Galanteries des Rois de France, t. 2.

afterwards affixed in the church of St. Just de Lyons, a ceremony which she herself attended with great state and ostentation. The conduct of his majesty was the more reprehensible, as madame la marquise still alluded in terms of insolent contempt to the new queen; and vowed that the life of Marie de Medici should be one long period of repentance, for her "shameless usurpation of conjugal relations with his majesty." Henriette procured exact information respecting the temper, disposition, and foibles of Marie de Medici. The early admiration evinced by Don Virginio duke de Bracciano, for the princess, was a fact treasured, and afterwards used for her own ends by Henriette. Her influence was also secretly employed in support of the prayer of the princess that Eleonore Dori might be enrolled on the household. One advantage Henriette possessed over her future royal mistress: the temper of the princess was quick and even vehement in its manifestations. Madame la Marquise revelled in well-aimed acridity of speech, inexpressibly provoking; while she never declaimed at random. Henriette possessed a singular power of fascinating even by her transports: and Henry, after listening humbly to the most cutting sarcasms, often departed, expressing himself still more enamoured by the piquant attractions of his mistress.

The continued ill humour of the supreme pontiff severely taxed the forbearance and diplomacy of d'Ossat. Daily was this eminent prelate summoned to the Vatican to listen and respond to the querulous complaints of his holiness; who intensely dreaded the invasion of Piedmont, and a consequent general arming throughout Italy. The pope had hoped to receive consolation from the duke de Bellegarde,

who, it was expected, would not fail to pay his respects in Rome; to thank his holiness for the interest he had demonstrated in the marriage of his Christian majesty, as evidenced by the mission of cardinal Aldobrandini to Florence, to perform the ceremonial of the royal espousals. The pope sighed when he learned that the duke, being pressed for time, could not visit the papal court: his holiness, therefore, directed the attention of the French envoy to the inconvenience to which he was about to submit, in dispensing, for an interval, with the services of his nephew and principal secretary of state; and to the magnificent outfit of the legate. "All this I have done to content and honour the king of France," said his holiness. Clement then informed d'Ossat that he had assigned to the cardinal a daily revenue of 1000 crowns; and an additional sum to purchase equipments. "The king, if he wishes to gratify me in return, will make peace with M. de Savoye on receiving back his own territory. Such was the aim of my envoy Calatagirone," added the pope. D'Ossat replied, that when the forts of Montmellian and Bourg had capitulated, and remained guarantees of the good faith of M. de Savoye, he believed the king might grant a suspension of arms at the request of his holiness... Clement grumbled, and stated his fears lest Henry meant to retain Savoy,[1] and push his conquests into Italy; he also complained that the arch-heretic Lesdiguières was employed to conduct the campaign, while other orthodox generals were suspected by his majesty.[2] The chagrin of his holiness was much increased by a

[1] "Je crains que le roy n'ait prit cœur à la Savoye."—D'Ossat—Lettre 243.

[2] Ibid.—D'Ossat remarked, to cheer the pope, that Les-

visit from the Spanish ambassador the duke de Sessa, who asked audience to urge the pope to summon the belligerent powers to observe the treaty of Vervins; for his court was convinced that the war waged against the duke de Savoye was but a pretext to enable his Christian majesty to invade the Milanese, and the kingdom of Naples. The duke gave notice that the first advance made by the French into Piedmont would be a signal for the military occupation of the whole of Italy by the armies of his Catholic majesty. Clement, on the following morning, sent in great tribulation for d'Ossat and other prelates, supporters of Gallic influence, and proposed that his nephew and legate Aldobrandini should proceed from Florence to Turin, and from thence to confer with king Henry, with the view of mediating between the belligerents, on the basis of the treaty of Paris. The pope informed the personages summoned, "that 2,000 Spaniards[1] had already joined the standard of Savoy; while the attitude of the viceroy Fuentes daily became more threatening and warlike." The expediency of this negotiation was discussed a few days subsequently in consistory, and applauded. Already the minor sovereigns of Italy had been canvassed by one or other of the hostile powers: Florence and Venice stoutly supported the cause of the king; and objected to the proposed substitution of territory, for the legitimate claim which France had on Saluzzo.

diguières might one day change his faith. "S'il avait cette volonté il y a long temps qu'il l'auroit mise en effet," irritably rejoined his holiness.

[1] These Spaniards were under the command of Don Juan de Mendoza, whom the duke subsequently made marquis de St. Germain for his services. On this promotion to the viceroyalty of Milan, Mendoza was made marquis de Inojosa by Philip III.

The duke de Bellegarde, attended by a suite of forty gentlemen, meantime entered Florence on the 20th of September, to accomplish the last formalities of the royal espousals, previous to the departure of Marie de Medici for Marseilles. The selection of this accomplished courtier and favourite of the king gave gratification to the grand-duke. The king commended Bellegarde to the favour of the princess, and terms the duke "*créature particulièrement à luy.*" Bellegarde was met by Don Giovanni and by Don Antonio de Medici at the gates of Florence. He was escorted to the Pitti palace, where the grand-duke received him in the hall of that magnificent edifice. The duke obtained immediate audience of the princess, and presented to her the rich presents and the letters confided to him by king Henry. In the evening Bellegarde, in the presence of the court, delivered the letters procuratory signed by the king, nominating the grand-duke as his majesty's proxy at the approaching ceremonial.[1] Joyous festivities celebrated the arrival of Henry's ambassador; and the Florentine people testified, by enthusiastic *vivas*, their participation in the honour conferred by so puissant a monarch on their reigning house. Marie herself appears to have enjoyed popularity with the Tuscans; and her elevation to the crown matrimonial gave sincere satisfaction. Many illustrious personages visited Florence to be present at the marriage: the princess Eleonore de Medici, duchess of Mantua, and her husband, were guests of the grand-duke. The Venetian republic sent a noble ambassador; but such was the jealousy excited by

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

the prosperity of the Medici that no other state of Italy deputed envoys. Philip III. contented himself with causing cold congratulations to be transmitted to Florence, through his ambassador at Rome, the duke de Sessa. On the 4th day of October the papal legate, Aldobrandini, made his superb entry into Florence. His eminence was escorted by the grand-duke, and by the flower of the Florentine *noblesse*. He rode under a canopy of state in full *pontificalia*, preceded by mace-bearers, and by his chaplain-in-chief, bearing aloft a golden cross.[1] He alighted at the church of St. Lorenzo, and from thence proceeded to the Pitti palace. In the evening the queen-elect held a court to receive the congratulations of the legate. Marie's reply appears to have gratified the French courtiers present. "M. le cardinal," replied she, to the somewhat inflated compliments of the legate, "God has ordained my present lofty destiny; but the benediction of our Holy Father I receive as a special blessing. I pray that I may fulfil all duties worthily; and I petition for the prayers of his holiness and the Church."[2]

The following day, October 5th, the ceremony of the espousals of Henry and Marie was performed by the legate in the church of St. Lorenzo.[3] Mass

[1] The cardinal's immense baggage-waggons and array of sumpter-mules astonished the spectators. Aldobrandini was young, handsome, and luxurious to excess in his habits and costume.

[2] The haughty deportment of the princess, however, and the independence she evinced, greatly surprised the legate, who thereupon predicted that the time might come when Henri IV. would regret queen Marguerite.

[3] Cayet—Chron. Septennaire. Godefroy—Grand Cerém. de France, t. 2. Marlot Theatre d'Honneur.

was said by the cardinal; at the conclusion of which the grand-duke rose from his chair, and placed himself on the left of his eminence. The princess was then led from her *prie Dieu*, by the duke de Bellegarde, to the place of honour at the right hand of the legate. The train of the bride was borne by her favourite Donna Eleonore, assisted by two pages. The procuration, signed by Henry, having been read, the marriage was solemnized, duke Ferdinand representing the king. The queen, on the conclusion of the service, was conducted back to her chair of state, amid *vivas* and salvoes of artillery.[1] A son of the grand-duke was subsequently baptized by Aldobrandini—his sponsors being the republic of Venice, represented by suitable envoys, and the duchess of Mantua, sister of the new queen.[2] A revel of extraordinary magnificence ensued, in the noble halls of the palazzo Pitti. The ball was opened by the bride and her uncle, who went through the stately steps of the *passimento de Espana* Marie then desired that the duke de Bellegarde should lead some of the dances in vogue at the French court, the which her majesty watched with curious attention. A banquet followed of almost fabulous splendour. The table at which the queen supped was placed across the hall, and raised four feet. *Vis-à-vis* was a buffet, elevated to the ceiling of the hall, in the form of fleur-de-lis. Upon the shelves of this buffet were displayed costly vases of gold, silver, and ivory, cups beset with rare jewels, tazzas, shields, reliquaries of costly workmanship, trophies of antique jewellery—in short, most of the inestimable treasures amassed by the

[1] Ibid.—MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

[2] Don Lorenzo de Medici, youngest son of Ferdinand I. and Christine de Lorraine.

Medici. Jewelled sconces holding tapers; mirrors set in Florentine mosaic; and *jardinières* filled with fragrant flowers, adorned the walls of the saloon. Queen Marie sat, having at her right hand the duchess of Mantua, her sister—the grand-duchess Christine, and the duchess de Bracciano.[1] At her left was the legate, the grand-duke, and the duke of Mantua. The plateau was decorated with statuettes of the deceased dukes of Florence; and with dwarf olive-trees in silver urns, mingled with vases of fragrant plants. There were also trophies of precious metal, modelled by Cellini and Michael Angelo, and drinking cups of novel design.

The duke de Bracciano and Don Antonio de Medici handed the dishes to the queen.[2] The service of meats over, the royal table, by some mechanical contrivance, disappeared through the floor of the saloon; from whence, after an interval, a second table rose, laden with exquisite fruits, *bonbons*, and conserves. This table eventually disappeared, and was replaced by a third, bearing delicious beverages, cut flowers, fans, small mirrors, and fragrant waters. A fourth table followed, raised with the same celerity. "This table was laid in imitation of the delicious gardens of Alcinous; flowers and fruits, mingled with tiny fountains, throwing up jets of perfumed waters, while numberless little birds flew from mimic bowers, and filled the hall with melody." A masque terminated the festivities of the evening.[3] The following days were devoted to

[1] Fulvia Peretti, niece of pope Sixtus V.

[2] "Le duc de Bracciano lui presenta à laver, et Sillery ambassadeur du roi la serviette."

[3] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. Cayet, De Thou, Mathieu, Perefixe, Galluzzi, Nani, Leti, Dreux du Radier, Tenhove.

sumptuous banquetings, jousts, comedies, and tilts. A second masque and a pastoral were played, the cost of which amounted to 60,000 crowns. The munificence of the grand-duke was lavishly manifested: his donations to the French cavaliers were liberal; and their entertainment, which was superb, was defrayed. The bridal jewels of the queen amounted in value to little less than the sum paid as her dowry: and Ferdinand took every opportunity to manifest that regard for the honour of his house, and not penurious greed, was his reason for refusing the million of scudi demanded by Rosny and Villeroy. The duke de Bellegarde rendered himself peculiarly acceptable to his royal mistress; the more so as he was the bearer of the king's verbal permission that Eleonore Dori might journey to France in the suite of the queen. The latter still exercised unbounded influence over her mistress. The demeanour of Marie, though outwardly submissive, was not quite what the duke her uncle desired. Eleonore counselled the queen to ask for no favour from her betrothed husband, either for herself or respecting the nomination of certain Italian cavaliers whom the grand-duke was anxious to attach to the household of his niece, until after her arrival in France; when, as the former shrewdly observed, his majesty would find difficulty in denying petitions made personally by his consort. One of the great solicitudes of the favourite, however, was her own want of rank. In the aristocratic court of France, where Eleonore hoped to play so conspicuous a rôle, the daughter of Carlo Dori the joiner seemed no fitting mediatrix between the queen and the great ladies of the household. With the co-operation of the queen, therefore, Eleonore showed proof that at

some distant period the Dori had been allied with the noble Florentine family of Galigai. The sole representative of the latter was an old man, childless and impoverished. A sum of money, therefore, rendered the last Galigai willing to acknowledge kinship with a lady of manner so insinuating; and whose future destiny seemed likely to restore the fallen honours of his race.[1] The surname of Galigai was thenceforth assumed by Donna Eleonore; and the queen thereupon rashly promised her favourite the office of *dame d'atours*, being then ignorant that the post had been accepted by madame de Richelieu, mother of the future cardinal of that name, on the nomination of the king. A cortége of more than three thousand cavaliers assembled in Florence to escort the queen to Leghorn, and from thence to Marseilles. In vain the French ambassador attempted to diminish the number of these noble adventurers. In reply to the remonstrances of the duke de Bellegarde, the grand-duke observed that king Henry might dismiss the majority at Marseilles; and that he desired consideration alone for those cavaliers furnished with a special recommendation; but that to refuse the homage of personages assembled to honour a daughter of the Medici, would be an ungracious act on the part of the Florentine government. Amongst the cavaliers favoured with a letter of credit was the cavaliere Concino Concini. This young nobleman was the nephew of Bartolomeo Concini, the wise and enlightened minister of Cosmo I. His father, Giovanni Concini, likewise, eminently served the state during the reign of Francesco I., holding the offices of senator and auditor-in-chief of the Tuscan cabinet. Concini, dis-

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5—Galluzzi.

regarding the example of virtue and integrity displayed by his uncle and his father, led a life of riot, and profligacy,[1] and had already dissipated the patrimony they bequeathed. Duke Ferdinand made many attempts to reclaim the prodigal; the more especially as Concini demonstrated tact, and unusual powers of forbearance and intrigue. His courteous manner had won the *bienveillance* of the queen; to whom Concini had been specially presented by her cousin the duke de Bracciano.

On the 13th day of October queen Marie took her departure from Florence *en route* for the realm of France. She was accompanied by the grand-duchess Christine and by her sister the duchess of Mantua. In the suite were Don Giovanni de Medici, who was to take command of the squadron; the illegitimate brother of the queen, don Antonio de Medici; her cousin, don Virginio, duke de Bracciano, and the minister, cavaliere de Vinta: these noble personages were all to take leave of her majesty at Marseilles. At Pisa the bridal cortége was welcomed with enthusiasm; and the inhabitants regaled the queen with a banquet, and the pastime of a naval combat on the Arno. Marie arrived at Leghorn on the 17th of October, and immediately embarked. The royal squadron consisted of seven grand-ducal galleys, one French ship, five papal frigates, and five galleys of Malta. It is stated that

[1] Ce garçon en sa jeunesse s'adonna à toutes les debauches imaginables, mangea tout son bien, et se rendit si infâme que la première chose que les pères defendaient à leurs enfans c'étoit de hanter Concini. N'ayant plus de quoi vivre à Florence il s'en alla à Rome ou il servit le cardinal de Lorraine; apres il revint à Florence—Tallement des Reaux—Historiette 18.

the number of persons who embarked in the ships composing the royal squadron, and on board the vessels in port lying ready to escort the fleet, exceeded 10,000. Marie took leave of her uncle the grand-duke on the deck of her galley, and shed many tears on leaving the bright land of her birth. When the signora Galigai kissed her sovereign's hand on saying farewell, Ferdinand counselled her emphatically to abstain from interference between their majesties of France; not to usurp the prerogatives and offices of the great ladies of the court; and, if she wished for an honorable and permanent domicile in France, to marry a Frenchman.[1] Eleonore promised compliance: she said she wished alone for repose; that she coveted no conspicuous honours; but only permission to devote herself to her royal mistress.

The grand-ducal fleet set sail on the 18th. The royal standard of France floated at the main of the galley which conveyed Marie de Medici, to commence that career of extraordinary splendour, and final adversity, which distinguishes her lot in the annals of the seventeenth century. "This galley of her majesty was royally magnificent; the length of the deck was seventy feet, the wood being everywhere covered with gilding. The stern of the vessel was inlaid with rare woods, garnets, ebony, mother of pearl, ivory, and blue-stone. In the saloon, opposite to the queen's chair of state, was a shield of the *fleurs-de-lis* of France, in diamonds; below, the arms of the grand-duke were represented by five large rubies, a sapphire, one pearl, and an emerald,—all the jewels being of extraordinary size and value. The panes of the windows of the royal apartments were of rock crystal; and the cur-

[1] Istoria del Granducato, liv. 5.

tains of cloth of gold."[1] Contrary winds and rough seas soon compelled the fleet to put in at Portofino, from which harbour the mariners did not venture to depart for ten days.[2] Marie was gratified by a visit from her brother-in-law, duke Vincent of Mantua; and, to celebrate the event, her majesty—who excelled in music—gave a concert on board her fairy galley. Though Doria and the Genoese had demonstrated animosity towards the Medici, by refusing to congratulate the ducal family, it was thought politic to greet the bride of Henri Quatre with becoming respect. The Genoese therefore sent an envoy to invite her majesty to disembark. Vinta, however, counselled the queen to decline the proposal; "as king Henry had given no instructions on the subject, and the republic had omitted to send a representative to the nuptial festivities at Florence."[3] Marie, therefore, though suffering much inconvenience from the tempestuous weather, bravely remained on board her galley; and never once landed during the nine days the fleet lay at anchor. The ports of Savona, Antilles, and Sainte-Marie were subsequently passed in safety; and the queen arrived at Toulon on the 29th day of October, where the Tuscan envoy Giovannini went on board privately to inform

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. Cayet—Chron. Sep.

[2] The poet Malherbe, pretending that Neptune, smitten by the charms of Marie, detained her by contrary winds and boisterous seas, wrote—

"Dix jours ne pouvant se distraire
Au plaisir de la regarder,
Il a par un effort contraire
Essayé de la retarder."

Malherbe—Poesies, liv. 3.

[3] "La reine repondit, aux ambassadeurs que le roi ne l'avoit pas commandé, aussi elle ne pouvait mettre pied à terre."

her majesty that the king was still engaged at the siege of Montmellian; and to impart the news that the duke of Savoy was advancing on the royal camp, reinforced by 2,000 Spanish troops, to effect the release of that important fortress.

Preparations on a magnificent scale had nevertheless been made at Marseilles for the reception of the queen. The royal purveyors, the master of the ceremonies of the court, and other high officers, received commands to superintend the disembarkation of her majesty; and to provide suitable lodging and entertainment for the suite. To meet and welcome his consort, Henry nominated Madame de Nemours, Madame de Guise, the duchess de Ventadour, the countess d'Auvergne, madame de Bellièvre, and mademoiselle de Guise. The duchess de Nemours, Anne d'Este, held office as grande-maitresse. Henry, remembering the promise made ten years previously to madame de Guercheville,[1] gave her the appointment of "lady of honour," with a special recommendation under his own hand to the queen.[2] Madame de Richelieu was chosen for *première dame d'atours;* and madame de Fresne repaired to Marseilles to fulfil the functions of a *dame du palais.* Montmorency and the Chancellor de Bellièvre were despatched to compliment her majesty; and to express the deep regret of the king that the siege operations before Montmellian pre-

[1] See first part of this history, vol. 1.

[2] The letter was as follows: "Ma Femme: vous verrés et entendrez par madame de Guercheville mes volontés sur la forme que je desire que vous teniés en votre façon de vivre avec les princesses. Croyés la de tout ce qu'elle vous en dira de ma part. C'est une des plus femmes de bien du monde, et qui m'est fidelle servante. Aimés là; ses conseils vous seront toujours très utiles, et à moy très agréables."—Archives de Florence, t. 11.

vented him from repairing to Marseilles. These noblemen were likewise charged to present Henry's excuses and regrets to the duchesses of Florence and Mantua.

When the queen's galley arrived off the islet of Pomègues, the duke de Guise, governor of Provence, went on board to greet her majesty. The duke was attended by M. Zamet, steward of her majesty's household; and by Girolamo Gondi. The squadron appeared off the port of Marseilles about five o'clock on the evening of Friday, November 3rd, and was heralded by salvoes of artillery from the forts; and by a discharge of musketry from a guard of honour posted along the beach. A bridge and pier had been constructed to facilitate the landing of the queen: extending from this pier was a platform, richly draped, and from whence a long flight of steps, six feet wide, diverged. Two similar flights, connected by galleries, conducted to the lodging prepared for the bride. The city was sumptuously decorated; the authorities appeared in official costume; and much enthusiasm was manifested. The first salute boomed from the Château d'If. The cannonade was taken up in turn by all the forts; the bells pealed; flags waved from the shipping in port, displaying the colours of all nations; and crowds of spectators thronged every accessible point. When the salute was heard, the personages appointed by the king to receive his consort hurried to their posts on the platform of state. First marched the Cardinals de Joyeuse, de Gondy, de Givry, and de Sourdis; these prelates arrived at the landing-place just as the royal galley, having the flag of France at the main, sailed proudly into harbour. The Chancellor Bellièvre and Montmorency followed; next came a throng of

bishops, wearing rich copes; then a deputation of lords of the privy-council. Mesdames de Nemours, Guise, Ventadour, Auvergne, Bellièvre, and de Beaumont Liancourt,[1] and mademoiselle de Guise, next appeared, attended by pages and trainbearers. The queen was assisted from the deck of her galley on to the platform by the duke de Bracciano, and by Don Antonio de Medici. The cardinals reverently saluted her majesty; and immediately led her under a canopy of state which was placed at the ascent to the first platform. Self-possession and majesty characterized the deportment of the queen. Marie was attired in Italian fashion; she wore a robe and train of dove-coloured brocade, interwoven with gold threads; and a carcanet of pearls encircled her throat. "The figure of her majesty is magnificent, her eyes are sparkling, and her complexion good. She wears neither rouge, paint, nor powder,"[2] relates an eye-witness of the pageant. The duchesses of Tuscany and Mantua meanwhile landed and joined the queen. Marie was receiving the congratulations of the municipal authorities, which, on this occasion, were briefly expressed. Madame de Nemours next advanced, and, making profound obeisance, was named by the duke de Bellegarde. The duchess subsequently presented all the ladies, who received gracious greeting from their new sovereign. As the queen was fatigued, and somewhat indisposed, further

[1] Madame de Guercheville, who, being heiress of Guercheville, is constantly mentioned by that appellation, although the wife of the count de Beaumont Liancourt.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. "La reine," says another narrator of the pageant, "avait le front élevé, des cheveux du plus beau brun, des yeux vifs. Le tour du visage bien formé, une belle gorge, et une taille bien prise et riche."

ceremonial for that day was dispensed with. Conducted by the Cardinals de Joyeuse and de Gondy, and followed by the illustrious assemblage, marching two and two, queen Marie was escorted to her lodging. She then curtsied to the throng of courtiers, and retired. Two letters from her royal consort, respectively presented by the constable and by Zamet, were next perused by the queen before she accepted refreshment. Henry wrote:—

To the Queen my Consort.[1]

"Ma Femme—It is with extreme sorrow I announce that the preparations making by the duke of Savoye to relieve Montmellian will deprive me for the present of the satisfaction which I hoped to derive from your presence. This disappointment adds another grudge to the many which I owe the said duke; so, if he has now the courage to appear, I hope to pay my debts in full. It cannot be said that the beauty or the attractions of this country arrest me—the law of duty must govern that of love. I embrace you a million of times: This 22nd of October."

In the note intrusted to Zamet, and written on the same day, Henry says: "Ma femme, everything you know must yield to honour. I have so laid my plans that if M. de Savoye appears he will meet with a tolerable reception. Love me sincerely; for by so doing you will be the happiest woman in Christendom."[2] The following morning the queen, having recovered her usual spirits, received the French ladies at her *levée*. A magnificent court assembled, and Marie's new ladies of the household presented themselves to perform their duties. The queen,

[1] MS. Archives de Florence, vol. 2. Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

[2] Ibid.

however, with many condescending thanks, but to the surprise of all present, declined the services of any personages of her French household, until after she had joined the king. This step was supposed to result from the counsels of Eleonore Galigai, whose interest it was to prevent Madame de Richelieu from entering on the functions of her office, which the queen had allotted to her favourite. Much consternation ensued; Henry's orders were precise, that the queen's new servants should attend her after her disembarkation, and the Italians return to their own country. The gay and witty sallies of the queen, nevertheless, enchanted her new subjects, and rendered them indulgent to the caprice she displayed, which they attributed to the embarrassment of her position, in the absence of the king.[1] Marie attended mass in the cathedral; and proceeded thither in an open litter, followed by fifteen coaches, conveying the chief members of her French and Italian suite. The grand duchess, and the duchess of Mantua, accompanied the queen. Afterwards her majesty dined in public, and was much cheered by the Marseillais. In the evening Marie received addresses from the parliament of Provence, and from the municipal authorities of Marseilles. The ceremonial was one of extraordinary splendour. The queen entered the hall led by Montmorency; the grand-duchess followed with the duke de Guise, and the duke de Bellegarde escorted the duchess of Mantua. The oration, which is of great length, was spoken by Du Vair, first president of the parliament; it was

[1] "Marie avait le cœur bon, genereux, l'esprit delicat, mais bien moins etendu qu'elle ne le croyait; ayant plus de presomption que de capacité, et plus d'entêtement que de merite," writes an author—not one of the queen's warmest partisans.

deemed a model of eloquence, and drew tears from his auditory. When the harangue terminated, her majesty, who was visibly affected, rose and returned thanks in a few well chosen words in her own tongue,[1] although the chancellor Bellièvre was prepared to make response in the queen's name. The presence of mind displayed by the young queen astonished her subjects: from the time that Marie set foot on French soil, she showed an appreciation of the dignity and prerogatives of her rank which occasioned witty speculations, especially from the lips of Mademoiselle de Guise. When the deputations had defiled Marie passed into an adjacent hall, to inspect a magnificent state coach sent by king Henry as a bridal gift to his consort. Great disorders meanwhile ensued, in consequence of the influx of personages: quarrels occurred between the king's servants, and those in the suites of the queen and the duchesses. Brawls raged in the streets of the usually peaceful city; and much envy was excited by the superb equipment of the Italians. "All the Italian gentlemen, pages, and retainers wore uniforms of cloth of silver or gold: the liveries of the lacqueys shone with gold, and with the heraldic colours of their masters' blazon. The effect of all was so rich, varied, and splendid as quite to eclipse the suites of our French princes and courtiers."[2] Altogether seven thousand persons enjoyed the hospitality of France, at a cost to the royal treasury of 3,500 gold crowns daily. A feud also occurred for precedence between the Tuscans and Don Pedro Men-

[1] "La reine pria Dieu de lui faire la grace de repondre aux desirs, et aux esperances de la nation et remercia tous ceux qui étoient presents."—De Thou, liv. 125.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

doza, commandant of the galleys of the knights of Malta. When queen Marie landed, the flag of France was lowered from her galley, and that of Medici hoisted. Don Pedro thereupon claimed the place of honour for the flag of Malta; and proceeded to enforce his pretensions by driving Marie's beautiful vessel from her moorings, and usurping her position. The duchess Christine with great spirit summoned a council; where it was debated whether the insult should be avenged by firing upon the Maltese galleys. Don Giovanni de Medici, however, proposed that appeal should be made to the privy-council of France to adjudicate; as king Henry would probably take offence should his port of Marseilles be made the scene of conflict between the rival flags. This counsel was adopted; but no decision was pronounced—the chancellor Bellièvre was slow in forming opinions; while Montmorency bluffly suggested that the best mode of adjudication would be the departure of all foreigners from the king's port.[1] The Florentine lords, meantime, were of the same opinion, and advised their duchess no longer to delay her return: there was no prospect that the affairs of the campaign were likely to liberate the king; who, moreover, had consented to confer with the legate Aldobrandini at Chambéry. After a sojourn of ten days in port, *La Real Toscana* was again prepared for sea, and anchored off the pier constructed for the landing of the queen, ready for the re-embarkation of the duchesses. The queen, though she evinced outward serenity, was uneasy and dissatisfied. The uncertainty of the king's movements rendered her position embarrassing. Reports, also, relative to madame de Verneuil had greatly kindled Marie's indig-

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. Cayet—Chron. Sep.

nation.[1] She, moreover, knew that la Marquise was at Lyons; and had recently journeyed to Grenoble to give his majesty rendezvous. Under these circumstances, the queen resolved to be escorted to Lyons by her brother Don Antonio de Medici, and by Don Virginio duke de Bracciano; the cavaliere Vinta, also, as the representative of the grand-duke, had been ordered to attend her until after the celebration of her marriage. This decision was not altogether pleasing to Montmorency and Bellegarde, who desired to see the queen emancipated from the influence of her countrymen; but Marie resolutely persisted in journeying so attended, or in remaining at Marseilles until the termination of the campaign. The duchesses, therefore, departed with their respective suites on the 13th of November; both princesses expressing great disappointment at being deprived of their promised interview with his majesty.

The following day queen Marie continued her journey to Avignon, escorted thither by a body of 2,000 horse. The Jesuits of the papal college of Avignon undertook the expense and ordering of the pompous pageant organized to greet the bride of Henri IV. The fathers hoped thus to commend themselves to the *bienveillance* and clemency of the king; and to prove themselves worthy of the protection of those lords of the privy-council who perseveringly advocated the repeal of the edict which banished the order from France. The venerable city, there-

[1] Mademoiselle de Guise, piqued by the queen's grand manner, was supposed to have given her majesty the first true outline of the position occupied by madame de Verneuil at court. It does not seem, however, that Marie was cognizant until long afterwards of the promise of marriage given by the king to his mistress.

fore, presented the most festive aspect: triumphal arches, pyramids, gigantic devices illustrative of the lives of Henri and Marie, greeted the queen in every street. The number seven was chosen as the type of all the devices—the city of Avignon possessing 7 palaces, 7 convents, 7 monasteries, 7 hospitals, 7 colleges, and 7 gates. The seventh day of the month was also said to be peculiarly auspicious to the king; all his majesty's victories and domestic joys having fallen upon that date. The queen's abode was the ancient palais de Poitiers; where her majesty was magnificently regaled during three days by the vice-legate, with a succession of banquets, balls, and concerts. The papal judge-advocate, Francisco Suarez, harangued the queen on his knees in the name of the clergy of Avignon; and in his address prayed that God would speedily give her majesty a son. "*Pregate Iddio, acciò me faccia questa gracia!*" promptly responded the queen.[1] The fathers, being resolved not to lose by the absence of the king the benefit they hoped to derive from their magnificent pageants, commissioned one of their order, the Jesuit Valladier,[2] a skilful artist, to make coloured designs on vellum of the procession and arches. These paintings they enclosed in a magnificent binding, and the community went in a body to petition queen Marie to take charge of the book, and present it to her royal consort. On the second day of her majesty's sojourn in Avignon a special courier, the abbé del Bene, brought

[1] Cayet. Dreux de Radier. Hist. de la Ville d'Avignon.

[2] André Valladier, abbé de St. Amont de Metz. The work was entitled, "Labyrinthe Royale de l'Hercule Gaulois," etc., in fol. Avignon, 1601. The priestly chronicler informs us that "La reine etait vetue d'une robe de drap d'or à fond bleu, coiffée fort simplement, la gorge couverte, les cheveux en leur naive beauté sans griserie, et sans fard."

the queen the joyful news of the expected capitulation of Montmellian. "*Ma femme,*" wrote Henry, "every one raised such clamour that M. de Savoye was at length compelled to appear. The van of his army is now billeted in two villages at the foot of Mont. St. Bernard. I am delighted at the account of your reception in Marseilles; it is only a foretaste, however, of the enthusiasm which will everywhere greet you."[1]

The fall of Montmellian proved the decisive incident of the campaign. Its brave defender, M. de Brandis, having sustained a rigorous siege, signed the capitulation of the fortress, under the auspices of Rosny and Epernon, undertaking to surrender by the 16th of the month, unless succoured by the advance of M. de Savoye. The same day Erminio, secretary of the cardinal legate Aldobrandini, arrived in camp from Turin, to propose renewed conferences in the name of his holiness. Aldobrandini, on leaving Florence, journeyed to Milan to confer with the viceroy. The insincerity of M. de Savoye was so well appreciated, that the legate declined to interfere unless supported by the positive pledge of Fuentes, that no Spanish intervention should occur, provided that his eminence persuaded king Henry to grant peace on the basis of the treaty of Paris—*i.e.*, the exchange of Saluzzo for the county of Bresse, a free passage being reserved through that territory for Spanish troops when *en route* for the Low Countries. The cardinal showed himself a wary diplomatist: the viceroy, after much wrangling, gave the promise required, trusting to the intrigues and dissensions of Henry's courtiers to renew hostilities so soon as the Spanish cabinet

[1] MS. de Florence—Correspondence Politique.—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

gave the signal.[1] Aldobrandini, therefore, left his *suite* at Alexandria, and repaired to Turin. He found M. de Savoye sullen and taciturn, though daunted by the success of the king's arms. At first the duke declined to hear of peace; and inveighed against the tyrannical usurpations of the king. The expostulations of the legate, however, and the sight of the compact which the cardinal had been adroit enough to make with Fuentes, induced M. de Savoye, as usual, to dissimulate. He thereupon authorized Aldobrandini to make overtures to king Henry; and promised, in case the reply of his majesty was favourable, to accredit MM. des Allymes and d'Alçonat as plenipotentiaries to sign "equitable conditions." The pending capitulation of Montmellian, however, infuriated the duke beyond measure. Biron, thereupon, wrote letters, copies of which were produced at his trial, exhorting duke Charles to relieve Montmellian; and stating, that the influence of the lords of the council, well-affected towards Spain and Savoy, had procured the besieged the stipulated delay in the articles of capitulation, in the hope that the duke would advance from Aosta to the succour of M. de Brandis. Biron bitterly complained of the supineness manifested by M. de Savoye; and boldly declared that many lords of the royal army would have joined his standard had the duke afforded them opportunity, by attempting to arrest the progress of the king. The duke, taking heart from this treasonable communication, wrote private letters to Brandis, commanding him to violate the capitulation; to retain the fort of Montmellian at any risk;

[1] De Thou, Cayet, Ferreras—Hist. de España. Hist. de la Conquête de Bresse et de Savoye par le Roy très chretien—La Poplinière, 1601.

and to abandon the hostages he had given to their fate—adding, that he never intended to make peace with king Henry. The courier was intercepted by a party of royal troops, and the duke's letter carried to his majesty. "Mon ami," wrote Henry to Rosny, who was absent from head-quarters surveying the fortifications of Fort Ste. Catherine[1]—"Mon ami, you divined truly—M. de Savoye mocks us! Come quickly; and do not omit any orders requisite to make the said duke repent his perfidy. A Dieu!" Henry's next measure was to despatch the duke d'Epernon to M. de Brandis, the bearer of the intercepted letter; and to require from the latter a distinct statement of the conduct he meant to pursue. "Tell his majesty that I will keep my word. I deem my honour engaged to maintain so solemn a pledge."[2] The capitulation, therefore, was re-confirmed, and effected on the 10th of November; and Aldobrandini was saluted by the artillery of Montmellian as he passed by the fortress, *en route* to confer with the king. The command of this important fort was bestowed upon M. de Crequy and M. de Rosny conjointly.

On the 29th of November the legate arrived at Chambéry. He was received by Epernon at the head of the infantry regiments in camp in battle array. At the gates of the town the Count de Soissons, and the dukes de Montpensier, Guise, and Aiguillon, saluted his eminence, and wished success

[1] Mém. de Sully.

[2] Cayet—Chron. Septennaire. The surrender of Montmellian ruined the count de Brandis, who was remorselessly persecuted by the duke of Savoy; and after an exile from his country in France he was delivered up to the duke by the inhabitants of the Canton of Berne, who committed him to close prison.

to his endeavours. The first interview between his majesty and the legate took place in the cloister of the Capuchin monastery. Aldobrandini, who was a skilled rhetorician, made a pathetic exhortation to the king. He expatiated on the woes of Christendom; the sorrows of the pope; and the inferiority of the foe. He implored the king to stay his victorious arms; to be satisfied with Saluzzo, which M. de Savoye was ready to cede; and to give peace to the world, by consenting to open negotiations. The resentment of the king was now fairly roused: he replied that he had demanded his marquisate, and intended to have it; that he had no present intention of extending the territory of France; that he declined to grant an armistice, for "he knew from experience that the duke of Savoy would never entertain a design of peace until despoiled of all his territories, and reduced to nothing;" that he would not negotiate, nor yet enter into political conference during the absence of MM. de Montmorency and de Bellièvre, who were in attendance on the queen.[1] The king then showed the legate a copy of the duke's letter to M. de Brandis, in proof that the most pacific protestations of M. de Savoye were not to be trusted. A few days subsequently Henry despatched the Count de Soissons to lay siege to the Fort Ste. Catherine; he also sent d'Auriac with 2,000 men to storm the Alpine passes, and to make descent into Piedmont.

M. de Savoye, meantime, remained at Aosta, where his army lay encamped, in a miserable state of vacillation, uncertain of the aid of Fuentes, and daily fearing that his troops might be swept away by the

[1] De Thou. Mathieu, liv. 1. Mém. de Sully. Zilioli—Guerra tra Enrico IV. è Carlo Duca de Savoia, in 4to.

French. The snows alone befriended the duke at this season; which, by effectually blocking the passes, preserved his army from the assaults of Auriac. The king then established his military quarters in the village of Luiset, near to Geneva, to superintend the siege operation of Fort Ste. Catherine. Before his majesty's departure the ducal plenipotentiaries arrived, and were presented to Henry by the legate. The king reiterated to Des Allymes his resolve to hold Savoy before treating with the duke. "You see, M. des Allymes, that your master deals in words —I deal in blows. The duke thinks to spoil my marriage festivities: he is the cause that I fight instead of dallying with my bride. You are welcome; but I shall alone hold conference with the representative of his holiness."[1] Biron, who felt, by the gravity of the king's manner, that his loyalty was suspected, requested permission to attend his royal master. The intervention of Pope Clement had temporarily confounded the designs of the confederates. The marshal's sanguine spirit was soon depressed: no longer buoyed by the schemes of Fuentes, Biron began to deem it politic to reconcile himself with Henry; and if possible to baffle the vigilant scrutiny of Rosny as to his past proceedings. Henry was received with enthusiasm by the people of Geneva, who deputed the venerable Théodore de Bèze to compliment his majesty. The allusions made by Bèze to queen Jeanne, his early patroness, affected Henry, who shed tears, and, affectionately embracing the old man, presented him with a purse

[1] De Thou, liv. 125, who states that the king purposely treated the ducal ambassadors with indignity, leaving them with Calatagirone in his antechamber, while he conferred alone with the legate.

of 500 gold crowns. Henry subsequently made his entry into Geneva, and was received as the saviour of the citizens, who had long groaned under the oppressions of Savoy.

The siege operations under Soissons meantime prospered: and soon the garrison of the Fort Ste. Catherine, reduced to extremity, offered to capitulate at the expiration of ten days, unless relieved by the duke. During the siege, Rosny made characteristic trial of Biron's alleged understanding with the officers of the duke of Savoy. Biron, who was arrogant, and despised Rosny as a civilian and a *parvenu*, proposed one day, when riding with the latter, to make a near survey of the fort. Rosny replied that the proposal was dangerous; for that the *panache* and uniform of M. le Maréchal would afford the gunners a conspicuous mark. The marshal laughed, but spurred his horse close under the principal battery of the fortress. The cannon was instantly silenced; and no firing was resumed so long as Biron remained in the vicinity of the fort—a circumstance which afforded the shrewd Rosny matter for speculation. A few hours later Rosny quietly repaired to the same spot, in company with one of his subordinate officers. As he anticipated, he was received with a tremendous volley; and retired confirmed in opinion respecting "*les menées* de M. de Biron."[1]

The duchy was now French; and the "Duc sans Savoye," as Henry facetiously termed his antagonist, being sufficiently castigated, the king, leaving M. de Soissons to receive the capitulation of the fort, deemed it time to join his august bride, queen Marie. Cordiality between the queen and her French ladies, unfortunately, had not made much progress. Marie

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11th.

showed most predilection for the society of mademoiselle de Guise, who accommodated herself with tact to the society of the Italians of the suite; especially to that of Eleonore Galigai. The envoy Giovannini, during the sojourn of the queen at Avignon, first introduced the cavalier Concini into the private circle of the court.[1] Concini, aware of the influence of Eleonore, here conceived the project of espousing the latter, "not for the beauty of that lady, who was not fit to be looked at, but for the immense advantages which the alliance promised," writes mademoiselle de Guise. Flattered by the suit of Concini, Eleonore gave suitable encouragement to his overtures; she had little ambition, and her power over the queen was exercised in silence; while she shrank nervously before the bold homage of certain French cavaliers. The disposition of la Galigai, as she was soon termed, was not easy to fathom: she was timid and unobtrusive, and had acquired the strange habit, when sitting unemployed, of rolling little pellets of paper, or of wax, between her fingers and thumb. Her figure was slight; her face thin, so that her dark eyes appeared unnaturally large and prominent. Eleonore publicly showed humble deference to her royal mistress: she, however, slept at the foot of Marie's bed, and when the attendants were dismissed from the royal chamber, and the queen's curtain closed, then commenced the reign of the young Florentine girl. To please her favourite, Marie accepted "the noble Concini" as the betrothed of the former; and promised to procure for both

[1] The envoy Giovannini owed his fortune to the Concini; having first served Bartolomeo Concini in the capacities of groom, equerry, and secretary. Giovannini was then promoted to be private secretary to the duchess Bianca Capello.

offices of distinction in the household. The queen's conduct, meantime, was regulated by Eleonore and her lover, and by Giovannini, Don Antonio de Medici, and by the young duke de Bracciano: this council met daily in the royal chamber to discuss, the conversation being carried on in Italian. Marie quitted Avignon on the 23rd of November, and made her entry into the towns of Valence, Roussillon, and Vienne, journeying by slow stages. Magnificent preparations awaited her majesty at Lyons, where the royal marriage was to be solemnized. The queen reached the faubourg de la Guillotière on Saturday December 2nd, and was greeted by M. de Roquelaure, who presented to her majesty the following letter from her consort, and a magnificent pearl necklace of the value of 150,000 crowns:—

To the Queen my Consort.[1]

"Ma Femme—I despatch to you by Roquelaure (one of my best and oldest servants) a present that you will esteem, not alone for its value, but for the excellent workmanship displayed by our French jewellers, who have thereon exerted their utmost skill. The bearer of this will recount to you my disappointment at not being able to surprise you on your road to Lyons. If some reverse did not mingle with my present prosperity, I should be too happy! Certes, my trial is hard to bear, for it will be eight days before I shall be able to see you—eight days, however, from the present period, and not reckoning from the day upon which you will receive this. I embrace you a million times. This 29th day of November, from Chambéry."

Marie made her entry into Lyons on Sunday,

[1] MS. Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Florence, vol. 2. Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

December 3rd. The relation of the pageantries, processions, and addresses which ensued furnish material for a volume. The most conspicuous figure in the cavalcade, next to the queen, was Don Antonio de Medici, who rode a horse with sumptuous caparisons, and who was attended by a troop of footmen, arrayed in scarlet liveries and golden collars. On the bridge over the river Saône a temple was erected to the honour of the Medici, with the following inscription over the portico: "*Immortalis domus Mediceæ virtuti et celsitudini.*" The edifice was constructed of green boughs, flags, and trophies; within were statues of the Medicean princes, from the great Cosmo. Marie attended a *Te Deum* in the cathedral; and responded with aptitude to the address of the archbishop of Lyons, in the accidental absence of the chancellor; who, from the queen's alleged imperfect knowledge of the French language, had hitherto interpreted most of the addresses, and replied to them in her majesty's name. The queen sojourned eight days at Lyons before the arrival of king Henry. During the interval Marie led a life of comparative retirement, in daily expectation of her consort's arrival, and disquieted by the feuds of her Italian *coterie*. Concini, also, fell ill, and was compelled to keep his bed for two days. Believing himself neglected during his illness by his usher who was a distant relative of the envoy Giovannini, Concini dismissed this individual. This act was resented by Giovannini, and violent dissension ensued. Eleonore espoused the quarrel of Concini; and induced her royal mistress to reprove the envoy for his ingratitude. Giovannini, consequently, from being the abettor of the design of Concini and his *fiancée*, went over to the French party, which insisted

that after his majesty's arrival the Italians *en masse* should be dismissed.[1] The queen was further greatly provoked by hearing that madame de Verneuil, on taking her departure from Lyons, the day previous to her majesty's entry, had publicly boasted that king Henry's sojourn with la Florentine would be brief; and that he would speedily rejoin her at Verneuil! Though the words of Henriette were arrogant, her spirit at this period was more humble than usual, judging by the letter addressed by her to the king before leaving Lyons; but which had the effect which she intended on Henry's mind, while irritated by the cabals of Queen Marie and her suite.[2]

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. "Produsse questo diverbio tale alterazione di animo e di corpo in Concini che ricadde nella malattia con grave pericolo della vita: questa fu l'epoca delle massime discorde, e la Leonora ne giurò la vendetta."

[2] The following is the letter written by madame de Verneuil: "Sire! I am now reduced to the misfortune which a greater and past calamity compelled me to anticipate. The difference between my condition and your own has perpetually menaced me with downfall from the heaven to which you raised me, back to the earth from whence you took me. Sire, I do not accuse fortune of this calamitous reverse, for my felicity depended on you rather than upon Destiny; for it has pleased you that the joy with which France hails your marriage should be purchased at the price of my grief—grief not that you find yourself compelled to please your subjects, but because your nuptial festivities are the funeral torches of my life. I must be banished from your royal presence, and from your heart; or subjected to thraldom, and made to bear the disdainful glances of those who have witnessed my prosperity. I prefer, therefore, solitude, to sinking of heart in high places. I address you with sighs: your majesty knows my secret thoughts, as you have entirely possessed me. Sire, in my unhappy exile my only comfort will be the thought that I have been beloved by the greatest of earthly monarchs—by a king who has abased himself to give the

King Henry quitted Luiset on the 7th of December, and, accompanied by the principal lords of his court, including Rosny, set out for Lyons. Henry's elation was great, and he showed intense eagerness to meet the queen; and contentment at his marriage. "The king travelled post, attended by the principal courtiers. The weather was rainy, and we had to wait at the bridge of Lyons a full hour, shivering with cold and wet to the skin, because his majesty, wishing to surprise the queen, would not make himself known," relates Rosny.[1] 'Henry himself answered the challenge of the sentinels, and desired them, if they would not open the barriers, to send for the governor, M. de Guiche. The soldiers, not recognizing the voice of the king, refused what seemed to them so preposterous a request. The king then said that the duke de Montpensier and the count d'Auvergne were of the company, and wished to see their consorts, who were in the suite of the queen. Although the night was cheerless, Henry enjoyed this encounter with his sturdy troopers; and continued merrily to dispute, until the bar of the bridge was suddenly lowered, as some personage

title of mistress to his humble subject and servant—by the king of France, who has no equal here below! When I reflect on the greatness of your majesty, and the splendours of your throne, it seems to me a bewildering prosperity that I have ever merited your *bienveillance*. If it is a worthy attribute of princes to remember those whom they once loved, think, sire, sometimes of me—a woman who confided her honour, trusting to your faith as implicitly as she is now ready to place her life at the disposal of your royal majesty. From your very humble, and very obedient subject and servant, HENRIETTE. La marquise de Verneuil au Roy "—MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Béth., 8176, fol. 94.

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11. Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 2. Galluzzi—Istoria del Granducato.

recognized his majesty, and communicated the fact to the officer on guard. Henry repaired straight to the episcopal palace, and sent for M. de Bellegarde, commanding that his arrival should not be notified to the queen.

Throughout the day reports prevailed that Henry was in the vicinity of the city. Evening, however, closed in, the curfew sounded, and no intelligence of her royal consort solaced the queen's anxiety. The rumour was then purposely spread that Henry could not arrive before the following morning, December 10th, in order to clear the palace of importunate spectators. The queen sat down to supper at ten o'clock, by the advice of the chancellor Bellièvre. During the repast the king entered the apartment, which was filled with courtiers, wishing to look at his bride before their interview. His majesty placed himself behind M. de Bellegarde, who was a man of commanding stature. The sensation created by his majesty's presence, however, was so great, that Henry, after one glance at his bride, was compelled to retire—not, however, before the universal movement around her had attracted her majesty's attention. Marie turned pale; she spoke to the duchess de Nemours, and then made a sign that no more dishes were to be served. Her majesty rose from table after grace had been chanted by her chaplains, and retired to her apartment, attended by madame de Nemours and madame de Guercheville, and by Eleonore Galigai and two daughters of the Florentine banker Gondi, nieces of the duke de Retz. The queen was also followed by her brother, Don Antonio de Medici, and by the duke de Bracciano. Marie had scarcely entered her chamber, when a loud rap was heard at the door, and the duke de Bellegarde

appeared and announced the king. The queen advanced and made low obeisance, and was about to kneel and kiss his majesty's hand, when Henry put his arm round Marie's waist, and embraced her several times heartily. His majesty then bowed to the cavaliers present, and desired "*sa femme*" to introduce her relatives of Medici; which Marie accordingly did. The king next took the hand of the queen, and led her apart, desiring the duchess de Nemours and madame de Guercheville to remain; but signifying his wish that the rest of the company might take leave. His majesty, then seating himself by the queen, expressed his regret that the affairs of the war had prevented his journey to Marseilles. "At that period I held M. de Savoye in a trap, from which the snows alone extricated him: then, *m'amye*, I planned to give you rendezvous at Valence; but was counselled instead to take Ste. Catherine. I hear that the citadel of Bourg cannot hold longer; so we will go together and summon the citadel to surrender in the name of our queen!" "Sire!" rejoined the duchess de Nemours, "her majesty is ready to go where you will: she partakes of your stirring humour; and is, moreover, marvellously sage and discreet." "Madame, you ought never to praise a woman until after her demise; or say she is of this humour or that!" replied the king. Henry then related his adventures at the bridge of Lyons with much humour. He then rose to sup, and beckoning madame de Nemours aside, commanded her to apprize the queen "that the haste of his journey had prevented the preparation of his own apartments; and, therefore, that he must depend upon hospitable reception in those of her majesty." "Sire!" replied the duchess, "allow that you

have again espoused a handsome wife." "Yes," retorted the king, jocosely; "it is certainly a beautiful feature in a face to be queen of France!"[1] Henry then supped, attended by Rosny, and by a few of his more privileged courtiers. During the repast his majesty highly commended the personal gifts of his consort; and paid Marie the compliment of declaring, "that, had she not been his consort, he should assuredly have chosen to pay her homage."[2] The following day, December 10th, their majesties, still being satisfied with each other, attended mass in the abbey of Aisnay, where they kept the officiating prelate waiting two hours for their arrival. Sunday the 17th of December was the day fixed for the public re-celebration of the royal nuptial ceremonies, in order to give the legate Aldobrandini time to arrive from Chambéry. The intervening period passed tranquilly enough; the queen studied the humours of her august consort; and the Italian suite had agreed to suspend its cabals. The legate arrived on Saturday 16th; and was received by the prince de Conty, and the duke de Montpensier. The solemnity of the royal marriage benison took place the following day. The attire of the queen was sumptuous; her habit was covered with diamonds, and she wore the pearl necklace presented by the king. Henry appeared in a white satin habit, em-

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. MSS. de Baluze, 9675 E.—Lettre ecrite de Lyons sur le mariage du Roy—du 9 au 10 Xbre 1600. This curious record was written by an officer of the private chamber of the queen, who was present during this first interview between Henri and Marie, and who assisted in the ceremony of the *coucher* of the queen.

[2] Another author states: "Il ré si dichiarò contento delle bellezze della Regina, confessando di averla ritrovata superiore ai ritratti e alla sua espettativa."—Istoria del Granducato.

broidered with gold, over which was a short cloak of black velvet. The orders of the St. Esprit, the Garter of England, and St. Stephen of Tuscany, were worn by Henry. The queen was led to the cathedral by the prince de Conty and the duke de Montpensier, the train of her royal mantle being borne by the duchesses de Guise and de Nemours, assisted by Mademoiselle de Guise, the countess d'Auvergne, and the duchess de Ventadour. The cardinal legate received the august couple at the altar, and performed the ceremony, aided by the cardinals de Givry, Gondy, and Joyeuse, between the hours of three and four o'clock in the afternoon. The termination of the service was announced by salvoes of artillery; and by the distribution of medals and bountiful largesse to the people.[1] Their majestics then repaired to the banqueting hall in the episcopal palace, and there held notable revel. A ball succeeded the banquet, which the king opened with the queen. In the same dance were mademoiselle de Guise and the prince de Conty; madame de Montpensier and the duke de Guise; the count de St. Paul and the beautiful duchess de Ventadour; and Eleonore Galigai and the duke de Nevers. Cardinal Aldobrandini joined in the festivities. The bearing and *suave* manner of the prelate greatly fascinated mademoiselle de Guise; while his eminence conversed with the *piquante* princess with such undisguised admiration as to elicit many malicious comments.[2] The son of Gabrielle d'Estrées, the little duke de Vendôme, was present at this festivity, and was greatly caressed by queen Marie; who

[1] Godefroy—Grand Cérem. France, t. 2. Bénédiction Nuptiale, de Henri le Grand et de Marie de Medici.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

admired the beauty of the boy, and suffered him thenceforth free access to her presence—a notice which she never vouchsafed to his sister and brother.

This ball terminated the fêtes given on the occasion of the king's marriage. During the next few weeks nothing but discord and confusion prevailed. Rosny and Villeroy, chagrined to find that the influence with their royal mistress, which they had intended to appropriate, was usurped by two obscure Italians, counselled the king to dismiss la Galigai and her lover; and to suggest the early departure of Don Antonio and the duke de Bracciano. Giovannini, meantime, betrayed to Rosny the design of Concini to establish himself in France; and the envoy expatiated on the profligate propensities of the latter, which he showed must indeed be flagrant, when a cavalier, heir of the illustrious Bartolomeo Concini was compelled to seek fortune in a foreign land. The ladies and officers of the queen's household were therefore decisively appointed; and the roll presented to Marie by the king himself. Not one Italian name appeared thereon: the duchess de Nemours was confirmed in the office of mistress of the robes; madame de Guercheville as first lady of honour; and madame de Richelieu[1] *dame d'atours*, or first lady of the bedchamber. Marie, however, rejected the last nomination, and imperiously demanded that Eleonore Galigai should have this

[1] Susanne de la Porte—a lady of great vigour and intellect, and devoted to the interests of her young children. The cardinal Jules de Richelieu was her second son. The cardinal ever demonstrated towards his mother, whom he termed "able," the utmost respect and veneration.—Duchesne—Hist. généalogique de la Maison de Richelieu.

office; and moreover that Henry should consent to the immediate marriage of the former with Concini; whom her majesty declared that she intended to gratify with the post of chief equerry. Henry thereupon positively declined to sanction these requests; when the anger of the queen became so extravagant that a scene of tears and reproaches ensued. The king stated that he would consent to the marriage, and at her majesty's request portion the bride, provided that Eleonore and her husband returned to Florence. As this suggestion was supposed to emanate from Giovannini, the queen commenced a persecution of the latter, though the resident envoy of Tuscany; and even refused to admit him to her presence. Madame de Richelieu, meantime, offended by the haughty disdain with which her services were repaid, resigned her office and retired from Lyons, which increased the *imbroglio*. The sacrifice was considerable; for the emolument of this office was important to madame de Richelieu, who was the widow of the grand Provost, and embarrassed by an estate heavily mortgaged. The young son of madame de Richelieu, then a humble student of the Sorbonne, but afterwards the famed cardinal minister, eventually remembered this incident to the detriment of queen Marie. Rosny during these *tracasseries* testified his sense of the factious conduct of the queen's adherents by a dry taciturnity of manner in his interviews with Vinta. The latter had been sent to pay the last instalment of the queen's dowry; and to receive the acknowledgment of the king, and the counter-signature of his majesty, to the renunciation which Marie executed before leaving Florence of further interest in the fiefs and rich personalty of the Medici. Vinta thereupon wrote to his master the grand duke, de-

tailing the *fracas*; and complaining of the conduct of Giovannini and Concini, to whom he imputed the blame of these dissensions. The envoy, being summoned to justify himself, informed the grand-duke of the intrigues of la Galigai and Concini, and of the resentment manifested by queen Marie; which, he wrote, if persisted in, would speedily ruin her influence with the king, who liked only cheerful and engaging women. Ferdinand therefore directed his old servant Vinta to seek audience of the queen, whom he had known from childhood, and represent the sorrow of the grand-duke at these unworthy dissensions. "You have, madame, shown concern alone for the aggrandizement of an obscure lady, as if such was the aim of your glorious alliance, which has cost his highness your uncle political perils and diplomatic labours. I am commanded to remind you that your said uncle could have disposed of your hand to the duke of Braganza, or to a duke of Parma, and thus doomed you to a career of comparative obscurity. Madame, instead of rewarding your said uncle, by permitting him to rejoice, and participate in your joy and prosperity, you allow these audacious intriguers to mar all by their rapacity—and even go the length of alienating from you your royal husband by unjust reproaches and anger."[1] Marie sullenly replied—"That she was miserable, and without influence; and that the king was governed by la Verneuil: therefore, she intended to retain the friends of her youth."[2]

[1] Galluzzi—Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5. MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

[2] The anger of the grand-duke was roused by these intrigues and misconduct: in a letter addressed to Concini, three years subsequently, Ferdinand reproaches him with this conduct: "Dacchè cominciaste à entrare in Francia sempre teneste intenebrata la regina; e à Lione quando si fecero le nozze in

A reconciliation was at last achieved between the august couple, through the good office of Vinta, Rosny, and madame de Guercheville. The king, nevertheless, persisted in his refusal to allow the name of Eleonore Galigai to be inscribed on the household roll of his consort; but consented that Donna Eleonore might remain at the court of France, provided she claimed neither office nor precedence. This concession became the source of unnumbered calamities; for the grand-duke was then willing and able to compel the two adventurers, Concini and Galigai, to return to Florence. The little firmness displayed by the king encouraged the unfortunately mutinous spirit of the queen; who, perceiving that persistent agitation generally wearied the king into concession, took ample profit of this advantage. Madame de Lisle Marivaux, the widow of a brave soldier, but a woman of only average intellect, accepted the onerous office of *dame d'atours*, resigned by madame de Richelieu.

During the progress of these vexatious feuds, often must Rosny have recalled his conversation at Nantes with Henri Quatre, when the king confided to his ear the indispensable endowments necessary to attach him to the woman whom he might espouse: beauty, prudence, gentleness, wit, fecundity, wealth, and illustrious descent. Marie de Medici possessed five of these qualifications: she was deficient alone in prudent and winning gentleness; yet this failure eventually sufficed, with a prince of Henry's temperament, to render the conjugal yoke almost intolerable.

scambio di stare allegra di si gran marito, i vostri intrighi la faceano buona parte del tempo piangere; e volendi il re impiegarlo nei negozi di stato e darli grande autorita à poco à poco glieue facesti passare la voglia."—Lib. 5, p. 428.

CHAPTER III.

1601.

Continuation of the negotiation for peace—The plenipotentiaries, and their ungracious demeanour—Suspension of the negotiation—Audience of the Spanish ambassador with king Henry—Insolence of the language used by the condé de Villamediana—Arrival of the duke de Biron in Lyons—He throws himself on the clemency of the king—Generosity of Henri Quatre—Resumption of the negotiations—Signature of the treaty concluded between the legate Aldobrandini and M. de Rosny—Henry leaves Lyons—He visits Fontainebleau, and the château de Verneuil—Illness and troubles of the duchess de Bar—Journey of queen Marie de Medici—Her entry into Paris—Festivities—Her meeting with madame de Verneuil—Details—Position of the queen—Visit of their majesties to la Foire de St. Germain—Dinner at the Arsenal—Biron renews his relations with Spain and Savoy—Conference of Como—The treaty of Lyons—Its reception by M. de Savoye, and final ratification—Eleonore Galigai—She conciliates the favour of madame de Verneuil—The queen honours the latter with her *bienveillance* under certain conditions—Appointment of Donna Eleonore as *dame d'atours*—Embassy from Venice—Henry visits Calais—Jealousies of the Spanish court—Siege of Ostend—Proposed interview between queen Elizabeth and Henri Quatre at Dover—Correspondence—M. de Rosny repairs to Dover—Important conference with queen Elizabeth—Mission of M. de Biron to

the English court—Accouchement of queen Marie—Birth of Louis XIII.—Joy of France, and congratulations of foreign potentates—The grand duke of Tuscany declines the office of godfather to the dauphin—His reasons—Attempts to promote the abjuration of madame de Bar—Severity of the king—Spirited reply of Madame—Her constancy and sufferings—The duke de Biron at the English court—His conferences with queen Elizabeth—Queen Marie and madame de Verneuil—The latter takes up her abode in the Louvre with the consent of the queen—Splendid gala at court—Marriage of Eleonore Galigai and Concino Concini—Audacious wit of madame la Marquise—Her receptions in the Louvre—Melancholy and uneasiness of Marie de Medici—Demise of the queen-dowager Louise de Lorraine, and of other great personages.

KING HENRY'S domestic grievances, meantime, were aggravated by political embarrassments. The legate Aldobrandini had been followed to Lyons by M. des Allymes, and d'Alconat, count de Touzaine, envoys from the duke de Savoye. No sooner, therefore, were the royal marriage festivities concluded than the negotiations for peace commenced. Though this treaty was declared important, and an event to be desired, the plenipotentiaries assumed an attitude of supreme indifference as to the result of the conferences—Aldobrandini, from the lordly nonchalance with which he deemed it politic to treat the gravest affairs; Allymes and his coadjutor, from genuine perplexity, they having no confidence in their master, and believing it probable that he would disavow their acts. The king was in reality indifferent: his military ardour was kindled, a fine territory was conquered, his army thirsted to meet the foe, a reserve of thirty cannons, and a positive assurance from Rosny that in less than six weeks the royal exchequer could be replenished with one million sterling,

rendered Henry little tolerant of the guileful delays of M. de Savoye. The president, Jeannin, and M. de Sillery, were appointed to confer with the duke's ambassadors. These last personages commenced their duties by proposing the restitution of Saluzzo to the crown of France, on condition that the king restored to their master all territories conquered during the recent campaign. The royal deputies replied, that the offer of the marquisate would have been gladly accepted before the war; but as M. de Savoye had compelled the king, at vast cost, to open a campaign in defence of his just rights, his Christian majesty expected an indemnity of 800,000 gold crowns. This demand was at once negatived; the legate then intervened, and proposed that instead of Saluzzo the king should accept the county of Bresse; and as an indemnity for the expenses of the war, the adjacent territory of Bugey and Valromey, so that the Rhône might henceforth become the boundary between France and Savoy. Henry assented, provided that the forts of Cental, Mont and Roque-Sparvière were also ceded to France, which comprehended the district of Gex, with a sum in specie amounting to 100,000 crowns.[1] After a prolonged conference the Piedmontese envoys accepted the proposal, on condition that all the Savoyard fortresses captured were restored to their master, in precisely the same state as before the war. So far affairs proceeded with the utmost amenity. The legate assured the ducal ambassadors that he had received a promise while at Chambéry from Villeroy, and the chancellor Bellièvre, that the places captured should not be dis-

[1] Cayet—Chron. Septennaire. Mathieu. Zilioli—Guerra trà Enrico IV., e Carlo Emanuele duc de Savoia per il marchesato de Saluzzo, in 4to, Venetia, 1641.

mantled—an assertion which was partly true. The refortification of his Alpine strongholds would doubtless have been a serious item in the penalty which M. de Savoye had to pay for his folly; nevertheless, the chief anxiety was manifested for the preservation of the fort Ste. Catherine, which held in awe the heretic city of Geneva; and enabled the duke to maintain the terror of his arms over the inhabitants of the valleys of the Cevennes. Henry and his faithful Rosny, in their secret counsels, devined this object; they perceived that it was against the interest of France to preserve this stronghold, which lay on the route claimed by the Spaniards into their province of Franche-Comté. The Genevese, moreover, implored the king to demolish a fortress which perpetually threatened their liberty. The king, therefore, sent secret orders for the fort to be rased, and intrusted the execution to the Genevese. Such alacrity and good-will was evinced, that in the space of one night not a vestige remained: the inhabitants of the city, rich and poor, turned out and assisted in the work of demolition, and actually removed every stone, "so that no one could descry that a fort ever existed on the site."[1] When the news reached Lyons, the legate and the ducal envoys yielded to most unbecoming transports. Aldobrandini declared the compact recently proposed void: he accused the king of bad faith, by violating the word given by his ministers; of ingratitude towards

[1] Cayet. Hist. de la Ville de Genève. Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoye. Sully, liv. 11. "Dans une nuit les Genevois mirent cette citadelle rès-piè—rès-terre, de manière qu'on aurait eu le lendemain de la peine à croire qu'il y eut jamais eu un fort en cet endroit."—Hist. de la Conquête de Bresse et de Savoye par le roy tres Chretien—La Popelinière—Paris, 1601.

the Holy See; and even went so far as to menace the realm with interdict should hostilities be renewed. The ambassadors declared their powers cancelled by so treacherous a perfidy; and requested permission to retire. Sillery, however, quietly intimated to his eminence "that he might please himself whether he remained or departed; that the king had a right to do what he chose with his conquests; that the honour and interest of France were facts to be realized before the interchange of imaginary courtesies with his holiness; that his majesty was quite prepared to continue the war, and had only stayed his victorious arm in deference to the wishes of pope Clement; finally, that the value of the fort demolished was only 50,000 crowns—a trifling sum to a wealthy prince like M. de Savoye—if, indeed, this clamour arose from pecuniary consideration, and not at the loss of the fort as a military position." The legate, nevertheless, continued his threats, and refused to appear at any of the court diversions; until Henry, wearied by these cabals, sent M. de Bellièvre to intimate that, conceiving the project of a treaty to be at an end, he had ordered MM. de Lesdiguières and de Soissons to continue their advance upon Piedmont, and to carry on the campaign with vigour. A last attempt was made to daunt the "lion courage" of Henri Quatre. The Spanish ambassador, Taxis Conde de Villamediana, waited upon the king, and announced to his majesty, "that unless it pleased him speedily to make peace with M. de Savoye, the king of Spain would be compelled to embrace the defence of his brother-in-law and of his nephews." The insolent language of this ambassador had often galled the king in the olden times, when Taxis had incited and abetted the designs of MM. de Guise. On hearing

himself thus threatened, Henry turned sharply upon the ambassador: "You will not daunt me, Monsieur," said his majesty, "by your menaces, or compel me to grant peace to M. de Savoye. I have to inform you that if this war continues I will fill Spain with my gallant armies, so that your master will have little leisure to meddle in affairs in which he has no concern. The duke of Savoy is encouraged by the perfidious counsels of Spain. I am resolved, Monsieur, to repel with unflinching courage the petty craft of foxes: and I mean to charge boldly in front those who are cowardly enough to attack me from behind!"[1] Finding that the king would not yield, Aldobrandini and his colleagues, who never meant to close the negotiation, were sorely perplexed how to recede from the position they had foolishly assumed. Letters from M. de Bouvens detailed the extremity of famine which assailed the men of the garrison of Bourg; and stated, that unless relieved within the space of two days, capitulation was inevitable. The fall of Bourg completed the conquest of the county of Bresse; and altogether gave France a territory double in extent to that to be ceded by treaty. Des Allymes, therefore, privately waited on the legate, and besought him to renew the negotiation. Aldobrandini, dreading the anger of the Pope, should war blaze forth again, promised compliance on the first suitable opportunity; provided that the envoys gave him a written promise to abide by and sign the articles he should present for their ratification.[2]

[1] De Thou, liv. 125. Cayet.

[2] Ibid. The cardinal complained to the court of Rome that he did not receive the consideration which he was entitled to from Henry IV., who preferred the patriarch of Constantinople, Calatagirone.—Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat.

After the demolition of Fort Ste. Catherine, the duke de Biron requested permission to visit Lyons. The alienation of the king had been unmistakeably manifested when Henry celebrated his marriage festivities without requiring the presence of Biron. The duke was suffering extreme disquietude; the pending treaty indefinitely postponed the designs of Henry's foes, and, therefore, Biron's contemplated aggrandizement; while the clue possessed by the king to the machinations of the duke with the enemies of his country, might be made, after the conclusion of peace, the subject of inconvenient scrutiny. The undisciplined spirit of Biron rebelled at this position of affairs; and with unexampled audacity he resolved to become again what he termed "a free man," by throwing himself on the mercy of his indulgent master. The request of the duke for permission to visit Lyons was conceded. His first interview with the king took place in the cloisters of the Franciscan monastery. Henry received his old favourite with grave reserve of manner, and requested the duke to exonerate himself from the fresh accusations made against his honour and loyalty. The duke, assuming a penitential aspect, confessed that he had been seduced into deep error—that it was true, he had treated of his marriage with the daughter of the duke of Savoy without soliciting the consent of his sovereign. Moreover, when the king refused to nominate him as governor of Bourg, this harshness so transported him, that he had indulged in treasonable speculations; but without any real design to conspire against the person or realm of his majesty. Biron with much emotion then begged pardon for his momentary aberrations; he alluded to the regard with which the king had

honoured him throughout the stormy period of the wars of the league; he invoked the memory of his father, the mention of whose death before Château Thierry, while riding by the side of the king, ever elicited his majesty's painful sympathy; and for the future he promised a scrupulous fidelity. These assurances were made with the vehement language and gesture peculiar to the duke. The king asked for more precise information on the duke's intercourse with Savoy. This demand extorted further partial avowals, and a general admission of guilt. Biron made no mention of the true contents of the letters he had written to Fuentes, which remained undivulged until the copies taken by Lafin were perused; neither did he confess the regicidal design with which he was afterwards charged. Henry, whose affection for Biron was strong, and who was easily moved, wept with his prodigal; pardoned the betrayals, and promised that the past should not prejudice the duke, provided his repentance proved to be sincere.[1] The clemency of the king, however, proved the ruin of the marshal: had Henry received Biron's avowals with just severity, and ordered his arrest until all was examined and explained, probably a worse catastrophe might have been averted. Biron learned more and more to despise a master so easily appeased, and facile of belief. The duke, however, as the king afterwards alleged, did not make true confession of his deeds; but withheld the most important reve-

[1] Biron afterwards deposed that the words used by the king were: "Ha! maréchal, ne te souvienne jamais de Bourg, et je ne me souviendray jamais de tout le passé."—Vie du maréchal de Biron. De Thou, liv. 125. Queen Marie, however, when Biron was presented to her, said that he looked like a traitor, "avec ses yeux noirs enfoncés."

lations. In the presence of Villeroy and Sillery, Henry renewed to M. de Biron his promise of pardon; but without alleging for what misdeeds such was accorded. The duke d'Epernon, in whom the duke partially confided, repeatedly urged on Biron the policy of demanding from the king an act of formal absolution, signed in council;[1] which, at this period, Henry would have granted, so great was his foible for the duke. Biron, unfortunately for himself, disregarded this advice, either from presumption, or, that he dreaded humiliating comments, and perhaps scrutiny; and for the moment, resolving to be loyal to his king, he relied on Henry's personal assurances. Though the marshal temporarily retired to his government, his favour with the king seemed to flourish more than ever; even the vigilant Rosny was for a time convinced of the reformation of M. de Biron, if still occasionally scandalized by his unruly tongue.

The hostile attitude of the legate and his colleagues, meantime, dissipated the hope that equitable and pacific arrangements would at length be attained. The pope and his minister the cardinal de St. Georgio[2] gave cold receptions and sullen replies to the envoys of France: all the blame was attributed to Henri IV. of the evil resulting from the past war, and that which might arise from the pending campaign in Italy. In lieu of fort Ste. Catherine, it was suggested that Henry ought to offer compensation by a voluntary surrender of Gex and its district forts. In Lyons no anxiety prevailed: the king daily held

[1] Vie du duc d'Epernon—Girard.

[2] "Le seigneur cardinal de S. George fut froid et taciturne contre sa coutume, et j'oserai dire contre toute civilité, et encore contre son devoir."—Lettres d'Ossat—lettre 256.

council, and made preparation to lead his army over the Alps, and dictate peace in Turin. In all these councils Rosny ably supported his royal master: at the same time, having great confidence in his own ability and influence, he resolved to visit and confer with the legate, before he departed for Paris, whither he was going to make divers military and financial arrangements. Rosny, therefore, repaired to the apartments of his eminence, booted, and in travelling costume. The surprise of Aldobrandini was extreme when he at length comprehended that Henry was resolved to defy the Spanish power, and wrest from the duke an equitable treaty. "And you, M. le Marquis, where are you now going?" "To Italy, shortly," replied Rosny, "in good company, where I shall kiss the feet of his holiness!" The legate then gladly seized the opportunity to impart confidentially his desire to renew the negotiations. Rosny stated that the king had relinquished the hope of peace; that his majesty's measures were decided; and that it was useless to commence again an irritating controversy, in which neither party intended to abate one pretension. His eminence then anxiously demanded what in reality was the *ultimatum* of king Henry? "I know the mind and will of his majesty as my own," responded Rosny. "The conditions upon which his majesty will alone grant peace to M. de Savoye are the cession of the county of Bresse, the forts of Cental, Monts and Roque Sparvière, the territory on the banks of the Rhône as far as Lyons, the citadel of Bourg, the districts of Gex and Château Dauphin; the concession of certain privileges to the republic of Geneva; with the sum of 100,000 crowns: in return for which the king will grant to M. de Savoye certain passes, namely, le Pont de Gresin and other hamlets through

which a passage into Franche-Comté may be preserved to his catholic majesty; also the immediate evacuation of Savoy." Aldobrandini listened attentively, and then asked whether Rosny undertook on his honour that no other conditions should be added or proposed? and upon the reply in the affirmative of the former, the legate requested him to return to his majesty and procure powers to draw up a treaty conformably, which he was determined instantly to sign on behalf of the pope.[1] This was done, to the triumph of Rosny. The legate then summoned his colleagues, and directed them, in accordance with their promise, to ratify the act he had concluded. New *tracasseries* ensued: the directions of the duke to his envoys were of so confused and complex a nature that they admitted of a variety of interpretations. In one despatch the duke ordered them to obey the legate's instruction; in another he forbade them to sign any articles at all, at least without his previous revision; in a third he commanded them to call Taxis to their counsels, and abide by his direction. At length the united persuasions of Aldobrandini and Calatagirone prevailed on the ducal ambassadors provisionally to ratify the treaty, on the 17th of January, on the following conditions:—That one month should be granted to his highness of Savoye to resolve upon and ratify the treaty; secondly, that his eminence the cardinal legate should accept the responsibility of the compact, and guarantee them from the resentment of their master; especially as the Spanish ambassador had counselled them to sign nothing until they had had communication with the duke, who was then in conference at Como with the

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 11th.—"A l'instant nous conclûmes un traité qui languissait depuis si long temps."

condé de Fuentes.[1] The slippery evasions of the duke greatly amused his majesty. Henry facetiously wrote, about the end of January, to M. de St. Jullien, then his envoy at Venice, "*Vous aurez sçu nouvelles de la paix de Lyons—cette rhubarbe au cœur Savoyard; mais grace a Dieu, la main que tient le gobelet est ferme, et le faudra vuider tout entier!*"[2]

Two days after the signature of the treaty Henry, wearied of the annoyances which he still experienced in Lyons, resolved to take temporary leave of the queen; in order, as he asserted, to precede and receive her majesty at Fontainebleau. The true object of the royal journey, however, was to visit madame de Verneuil, to persuade her to return to Paris. Intelligence of anxious moment, moreover, had reached his majesty from Nancy concerning the health of Madame. The demise of one of her chaplains revived again the religious feuds which had been temporarily allayed from the period of the return of M. de Bar from his Italian expedition. The duke of Lorraine refused to permit this individual to be interred within the limits of the duchy; and the altercations thereby excited so affected Madame that she took to her bed, and wrote bitter complaints to the king her brother, on the indignities to which she was subjected.[3] The health of the duchess was seriously impaired: already dropsical symptoms showed themselves in the constitution of Madame, aggravated by daily disquietudes; and which her physicians ignorantly treated as proceed-

[1] De Thou, liv. 126. Guichenon—Hist. de la Royale Maison de Savoye. Sully, liv. 11th. Perefixe—Hist. de Henri le Grand. Mathieu, t. 2.

[2] Archives de M. de Marcieu.—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

[3] Bibl. Imp. MS. Suppl. fr. 1644.

ing from a totally different cause. The king despatched his own physician La Rivière to his sister; and cheered Madame by inviting her to visit the court of France so soon as she could travel. His majesty, meantime, passed through Montargis, Fontainebleau, and arrived in Paris on the 25th of January.[1] Every day the king wrote to his bride, as if nothing but harmony had prevailed between them. In one of these letters Henry gives the queen a few words of counsel; which it would have been well, under her circumstances, had Marie heeded: "Doubt not," wrote his majesty, "that I love you dearly, for now you obey my will: believe that this is the true way to govern me—in short, I desire alone to be so governed by you."[2] The king, after despatching this letter, set out for the château de Verneuil; a fact which, when it came to the knowledge of the queen, caused this advice to have rather an exasperating effect; as her majesty deemed it, as she said, "a gross and stinging insult," to be abandoned immediately after her marriage, that the king might visit his mistress. The château de Verneuil was then a magnificent though gloomy edifice, surrounded by a moat, thirty-six miles distant from Paris. Its architecture was singular: the château consisted of eight lofty and highly-decorated pavilions, united by spacious *corps de batiments* forming a quadrangle. The château was entered through a magnificent ves-

[1] "Le roy partit une nuit en poste de Lyons pour s'en retourner à Paris; et s'etant embarqué sur l'eau à Rouanne, il vint descendre à Briare: de Briare il vint coucher à Fontainebleau; le lendemain diner à Villeneuve, passant la Seine au bas des Tuileries, s'en alla coucher à Verneuil."—Mém. de Bassompierre, t. 1.

[2] Archives MS. de Florence. Correspondence Politique—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

tibule lined with marble, and adorned by six statues of princes of the house of Vendôme. To Verneuil Henriette retired on leaving Lyons. She received the king with transports of joy. The beauty and fascinations of his mistress riveted her empire; and the jealousies of Marie, and the rivalries of the suite, were forgotten by Henry in her society. The king spent four days with madame de Verneuil; and took leave possessed of the promise of Henriette to grace the fêtes on the queen's entry into Paris, on condition that his majesty insured her honourable and public reception from his consort.

Queen Marie, meantime, accompanied by Don Juan de Medici and the duke de Bracciano, quitted Lyons on the 29th of January. It had been the intention of the queen to salute the queen dowager, Louise de Lorraine, at Moulins; but the malady of that princess suddenly took so fatal a turn, that she was thought to be at extremity on the day fixed for the interview. Marie, therefore, continued her journey to Nemours, where she arrived on the 4th of February. She was there met by her royal consort, who escorted her to Fontainebleau,[1] so anxious was Henry to show Marie his favourite abode, with its magnificent forest and wild legends. To gratify this desire, Henry had commanded the postponement of the Foire de St. Germain, as he wished the queen to grace that celebrated revel of the Parisians with her presence. Marie made her entry into Paris on the 9th of February. Little magnificence was displayed; the king declined the proposal of the city authorities, who wished to welcome the sovereigns with pageants and banquetings at the Palais, on account of the

[1] "Cette maison pleure de quoy vous la voyés en hiver; mais il n'y à remède," wrote the king.

costs of the late war; while amongst the courtiers the enthusiasm for their new mistress had a little abated, owing to the disgraceful altercations in Lyons. Marie entered Paris escorted by the lords of her household, reclining in a sumptuous litter drawn by mules. With the queen was the little César-Monsieur.[1] Salvoes of artillery from the Bastille and the Arsenal announced when she alighted at the Hôtel Gondy, in the Faubourg St. Germain, where Henry, attended by a brilliant court, greeted her majesty. The same afternoon Marie received the homage of the principal ladies of the court. In the evening a ball and supper celebrated the queen's arrival. The fine person and majestic carriage of the queen elicited much admiration: exposed to so many censorious comments, without a single friend in that brilliant and witty throng, and deriving little support from her husband, whose affability was not always royal, Marie yet managed to maintain her dignity. The queen's presence of mind, indeed, was destined to receive rude ordeal. In the forenoon the king sent for the duchesses de Nemours and de Guise, and desired them to escort madame de Verneuil to the evening's festivity, and present her to the queen. The duchess de Nemours respectfully declined; and asserted that her royal mistress would never again endure her presence if she were made the medium of so notable an outrage. Henry, however, sharply and significantly reiterated his command: the duchess, therefore, had no alternative but to obey, and abide the consequences.[2] Madame

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644. Hist. de Paris—Sauval. Mém. de Bassompierre, t. 1.

[2] "Le roy commanda assez rudement à la duchesse de le faire, contre sa coutume qui etait d'être fort courtois. Elle l'ammena

de Verneuil, therefore, radiant in beauty, and brilliant attire, appeared at the Hôtel Gondy, and was led by Anne d'Esté to the queen's chair, against which the king reclined. The evident embarrassment of her *grande-maitresse* attracted the attention of the queen. Henry, however, advanced; taking the hand of his mistress, he led her to his consort, saying: "M'aymie! behold madame la marquise de Verneuil, a lady, as you know, well affected towards myself; but who desires also to become your very humble servant!"[1] Henriette curtseyed, and touched the royal robe: the king, however, deeming his mistress's obeisance not reverential enough, himself placed the hand of madame la marquise on the hem of the queen's mantle, and signed to her to kneel and put it to her lips. Marie slightly changed colour; and except that she refrained from speaking, and from giving her hand to be kissed by madame de Verneuil, made no further demonstration. At supper madame de Verneuil sat, by royal command, at the queen's table; and several times presumed to address her majesty, having recovered her accustomed assurance. This act on the part of his majesty was universally condemned; especially as people perceived that the queen's eyes twice filled with tears on being so insolently addressed. A reaction in favour of Marie resulted; which, as the feuds of her household were for the moment appeased, the queen took care to improve. Her vivacity of speech, yet courteous manners, imposed respect upon

à la royne, qui extrêmement surprise de cette veue, la reçut assez froidement; mais la marquise de Verneuil fort hardie de son naturel luy parla tant; et fit si fort la familière qu'enfin elle s'en fit entretenir."—Hist. des Amours de Henri IV. Louise Marguerite de Lorraine Guise.

[1] Galluzzi—Hist. del Granducato, lib. 5.

the ladies of the court, who, accustomed for so many years to pay *devoirs* to Gabrielle d'Estrées, had almost forgotten the etiquette exacted by the presence of a queen-consort. The popularity of the queen greatly increased when about six weeks after her arrival in Paris her pregnancy was announced. The people followed her coach with cheers and blessings whenever she appeared in public; the king showed her honour and devotion, and left her mistress of the court, in all respects, except the privilege of changing her household. Madame de Verneuil bided her time and wisely withdrew,[1] until the elation arising from the hoped-for birth of an heir to the crown should have subsided. Perhaps never had princess occasion to exercise greater prudence and forbearance than Marie de Medici on her arrival in France. Marguerite, the divorced wife of the king, resided in the realm, the last of her august race of Valois, and still authorized to entitle herself queen. The little duke de Vendôme, and his brother and sister, lived at court, and Marie was expected to caress and patronize these children of the rival who had so long delayed her marriage. In addition to these grievances, the king's mistress claimed her royal state; and had been permitted, without chastisement, to declare the royal marriage illegal, on the strength of a promise of marriage—acknowledged by king Henry as existing, but which had neither been formally cancelled, nor yet wrested from the custody of Madame de Verneuil. Marie also found the court disorganized, the royal circle being controlled by a few great ladies, who, accustomed to bear themselves arrogantly under the sway of madame la Duchesse,

[1] Madame de Vernueil occupied at this period l'Hôtel de la Force, close to the Louvre.

were at first little disposed to adopt becoming reverence of deportment towards the queen. Had Marie been the daughter of one of the great sovereign houses of Europe, her position might have been easier: the courtiers remembered the abominable gibes of the mistress, and were not inclined to demonstrate much veneration for "la grosse Banquière de Florence."

The day following the queen's arrival in Paris, their majesties visited the fair of St. Germain. The crowd being immense, a way was with difficulty made for the royal pair. The king led his bride by the hand, and several times stopped when the acclamations were loudest, to enable his good Parisians to gaze on their new sovereign. Henry, it is recorded, disappointed on this occasion the anticipations of the various stall venders; indeed, his majesty was renowned for his love of driving a hard bargain, and then of abandoning the purchase.[1] On the 13th, Rosny took the oath before the Chambers, as Grand-master of Artillery; and presented a patent by which Henry bestowed the title of marquis on his minister. This recognition of long and meritorious services was accepted by the Chambers, and forthwith registered. Rosny was escorted to the Palais, by the prince de Joinville and the dukes de Nevers and Montbazon, and other illustrious personages, anxious to please the king by honouring his minister. The same evening the king and queen dined at the Arsenal with M. and madame de Rosny. The new marquis was guilty, during this festivity, of a joke on the Italian ladies of the suite, of a nature very foreign to Rosny's usual decorum. Perceiving that these ladies greatly relished at the banquet some Bur-

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

gundy of fine vintage, he had the same wine presented again at the collation after the ball. Several of the ladies then asked for water to mix with the wine. Rosny thereupon directed that the ewers should be filled with a strong white wine, "perfectly colourless."[1] The unsuspecting damsels fell into the snare, mingled the potent beverage presented with their Burgundy; and returned to the Louvre in a condition which scandalized queen Marie, and provoked the boundless mirth of her royal consort.

The cardinal-legate during these incidents, intent on the ratification of the treaty, quitted Lyons, and repaired to Avignon. From thence he despatched his secretary Erminio to Como, the bearer of the treaty concluded; with an urgent letter calling upon the duke of Savoy, in the name of his holiness, to ratify a peace so requisite. With M. de Savoye and the condé de Fuentes was Lafin, the agent of the duke de Biron. The latter, perfidiously oblivious of the gracious clemency and affection demonstrated by his royal master, no sooner found that the warlike preparations of the Milanese viceroy continued; and that there were impediments likely to frustrate the contemplated treaty, than he despatched an envoy, one Farges, a Franciscan monk, to Lafin, with instructions to participate, as his representative, in the conference; and to confirm again the promise of his co-operation in the designs of the prince, on certain conditions—as he, Biron, "was persuaded that there was neither safety nor consi-

[1] "J'avais d'excellent vin blanc, et aussi clair que l'eau de roche, j'en fis remplir les aiguières, et lors qu'elles demandaient de l'eau pour tremper le vin de Bourgogne, ce fut cette liqueur quon leur presenta."—Sully, liv. 11.

deration for him, but so long as the war continued." Fuentes proposed again, as the basis of alliance with Biron—that, provided the latter succeeded in renewing the troubles in France, so as to dethrone Henry IV., and render the kingdom again at the disposal of the states-general, the king of Spain promised to give the duke his sister-in-law, or his niece, in marriage, with the duchy of Burgundy for her dowry, under suzerainty of his catholic majesty. Moreover, that Biron should be declared lieutenant-general of the armies of the French realm; with a pension of 1,800,000 crowns for the maintenance of the war. This compact had been accepted by Lafin on behalf of Biron; though it does not appear that the articles were ever actually ratified by the sign-manual of the duke. The arrival of the secretary Erminio was, therefore, very unwelcome to the subtle plotters; who were deluding themselves with the hope that no treaty could be concluded. M. de Savoye flew into a fit of frantic rage, when informed of the cessions agreed to by his envoys; he vowed to cause the arraignment and decapitation of Des Allymes and d'Alçonat; and absolutely declined to sign the document.[1] Fuentes contemptuously remarked, that he had no interest nor concern in the treaty—that his 40,000 men and 40 field-pieces were, nevertheless, for the service of his catholic majesty. The count and his ally, M. de Savoye, meantime, passed from flattery to recrimination. The former taunted M. de Savoye with apathy and want of resolution, when he ought, as

[1] De Thou, liv. 125. Cayet—"Le duc jura qu'il feroit couper la tête à Alçonat et Des Alymes, pour l'avoir signée. Fuentes dit, qu'il ne tiendrait ceste; qu'il veut, employer son armée de 40,000 hommes et de 40 canons."

Fuentes averred, to have been now besieging the king, with the help of M. de Biron, in Lyons! It was finally resolved to send to the court of Madrid for final instructions: and meantime, resolutely to reject the treaty of Lyons.

The vexation of the legate was extreme: he wrote to assure the king, that as his mission was undertaken at the request of his holiness, and of Sessa the Spanish ambassador, the convention concluded must eventually be signed; that the duke de Lerma was of pacific disposition, and not disposed to countenance aggressive warfare: finally, that he besought his majesty to add one fortnight to the term of the month stipulated for the exchange of treaties, to enable him personally to visit Milan and Turin. Aldobrandini courageously set out in rigorous weather, through deep snow; and, after a journey full of peril, arrived at Genoa. Fuentes, however, had returned to Milan, and the duke of Savoy to Turin—both desiring to avoid the conference. The legate, nothing daunted, continued his journey to Milan. He found the viceroy sullen and mysterious; but through the count Tassoni, the bosom friend of Fuentes, Aldobrandini extorted the admission that the viceroy waited to ascertain the final views of his government.

Pope Clement, meantime, after having for a time, as he said, lain at anchor in the haven of peace, absolutely raved with indignation at the intrigue which again threatened to drive him forth on the stormy ocean of warfare. The chancellor of Savoy, Dominic Belli, was rudely dismissed from Rome; and Sessa himself heard language seldom addressed to a personage of his quality. At length the important answer arrived from Madrid, and was de-

livered simultaneously in Rome, Milan, and Turin. It was comprehended in few words—"The king of Spain approves the treaty of Lyons, and designs to employ his army of the Milanese elsewhere."[1] The truth of this statement on the part of Philip III. received unexpected confirmation; for news of the disastrous battle of Nieuport,[2] lost by the arch-dukes against Maurice of Nassau, seemed an event likely to compel the sympathy and aid of his Catholic majesty. Driven, therefore, to rely on his own resources, the duke of Savoy, after fresh tergiversation, consented to affix his great seal to the treaty of Lyons; and engaged to despatch an envoy to Paris to take oath on his behalf in the presence of the king—which promise, he nevertheless evaded until the following month of November. Disappointed in their aims, distrust divided the late allies and their agents. Fuentes conceived some suspicion of the fidelity of Lafin, and abruptly dismissed him from Milan, on a mission to Turin; having previously forwarded a despatch to the duke, wherein the count stated his reasons for this step, which were never divulged, and advised the duke to effect the arrest of Lafin. The latter, suspecting the design, and, as he afterwards owned, repenting of his treason towards king Henry, avoided Turin, and, passing through Basle, arrived safely in France. His secretary, Renazé, however, happened to be in Turin. Duke Charles, therefore, acting with his accustomed precipitation, caused this individual to be seized and incarcerated in the fortress of Quiers. Lafin thereupon demanded the liberation of Renazé from the

[1] Ibid.—Alessandro Zilioli—Guerra trà Enrico IV. e Carlo duca di Savoia.

[2] Fought July 2nd, 1601.

duke de Biron. The latter, disregarding the grave fact that the secret of the recent conferences of Como was in possession of Lafin, refused to interfere; and, declining further communication with his late agent, the marshal forthwith initiated the baron de Luz, his lieutenant in Burgundy, into the secret of the confederation. A few months subsequently Biron thought it politic to take an oath from Lafin that he had burned or otherwise destroyed all documents intrusted to him, in the shape of letters, mandates, or memoranda. Lafin declared that, with one exception, he had so done; he then, in the presence of the marshal, pretended to commit to the flames the famous minutes transmitted to Savoy during the siege of Bourg. Another document, however, was skilfully substituted by Lafin, and consumed before Biron; while the important papers, which compromised the life and honour of the marshal, were safely stowed to serve as opportunity might hereafter warrant.

The king and queen removed to St. Germain, to spend the month of March. Previous to their departure from Paris, don Antonio de Medici and the duke de Bracciano took leave of their majesties, and set out for London, attended by Concini and other obnoxious members of the Italian suite, to visit queen Elizabeth; who, through her minister, had sent the cavaliers a gracious invitation. The influence of La Galigai remained as much in the ascendant as ever:[1] with subtle dexterity, Eleonore discovered a

[1] "Haveva condotto seco la regina per cameriara di treccie Leonora Galigai che veramente intrecciava la regina cosi graciosamento, e discorreva con tanta gentilezza di parole nell' intrecciaila, che veniva pagata della padrona, no solo con nobile et generoso salario, ma con tale affetto che haven luogo de gratia."—Leti—Teatro Gallico.

mode to conciliate all the ruling powers of the court. After a sojourn of a few weeks in Paris, she comprehended that to win the favour of the king, without which her licence to remain in the queen's service was likely any day to be revoked, she must please madame la Marquise; and conciliate the favour of her royal mistress on Henriette's behalf. Moreover, Eleonore was persuaded that the influence of queen Marie could never effect the projects she had most at heart—her enrolment as *dame d'atours*, and her marriage with Concini, and the establishment of the latter in France. Consequently, Eleonore one day presented herself at the hôtel of madame de Verneuil, and boldly proposed a compact—to whit, that the power of Henriette should effect that which the influence of the queen had failed to obtain; and, in return, Eleonore engaged to procure for la Marquise the *bienveillance* of the queen, admission to the private receptions of her majesty, with friendly and honourable treatment in public. The proposal was accepted. Madame de Verneuil promised Eleonore her appointment in the household; marriage with Concini before the expiration of the year, and the post of chamberlain for the latter.[1] It was a disastrous day for Marie de Medici when she condescended to make terms and accept such humiliating favours from her rival, and lower her *prestige* by admitting la Marquise to her intimacy—the courtiers then ridiculed the position they had before respectfully commiserated. The king, tutored by his mistress, thanked his consort for her condescension; and intimated that after such notable deference to his will, he could no longer oppose the appointment of Donna Eleonore as *dame d'atours*. Intense was

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

the surprise when madame de Verneuil appeared in *les petits appartements* of the Louvre, and was seen driving *tête-à-tête* with her majesty.[1] To obtain Henry's consent to the marriage of Eleonore, and the establishment of Concini, however, proved a difficult affair; and aware of the stand made by his majesty at Lyons, and his aversion to foreigners generally, Henriette asked for time, and advised that Concini should accompany his patron, the duke de Bracciano, to England. Still further to enlist the good-will of the Marquise, the queen next condescended to discuss the matter—"Madame de Verneuil resolving to effect this marriage," writes mademoiselle de Guise; "the queen then honoured the said marquise with such proofs of *bienveillance*, that she sent daily to inquire after her health, and divided with her the numerous presents which her majesty received: in short, the queen at this period treated madame de Verneuil with more distinction than any one of the princesses."[2] A clue was soon afforded to the public as to the cause of the sudden favour of the mistress: madame de Lisle Marivaux humbly resigned, and Donna Eleonore Galigai succeeded as *dame d'atours*. At first this *entente*. seemed prosperous for each party concerned. Henry overwhelmed his consort with attentions—la Marquise was respectful and submissive, and announced her resolve to reside at Verneuil until after the queen's

[1] "La regina per assicurare la grandezza dei suoi favoriti, coabitiva à S. Germano con la rivale, dissimulando gl'insulti e le indiscretezze del Rè, mèntre i cortigiani erano indecisi si più prevalesse in lei la leggerezza, o nella Entragues la sfacciataggine."—Istoria del Granducato.

[2] Hist. des Amours de Henri IV. par Louise Marguerite de Lorraine.

accouchement — while the new *dame d'atours* faithfully discharged her functions; and conciliated the subordinate persons employed in the royal chamber. Dearly, however, did the queen purchase the elevation of Concini and his future wife; and the brief sunshine which followed her unworthy condescension. The intelligence, when it was transmitted to Florence, occasioned the utmost concern, as well as indignation at the culpable selfishness of the king; who could thus compromise the dignity of his consort, and probably the legitimacy of her offspring— for madame de Verneuil and her family never desisted from their affirmation that the king's marriage was rendered invalid by previous contract.

At the end of March Henry and his consort made an expedition to Orléans, to gain the privileges of the Jubilee, which this year was celebrated with extraordinary splendour in Rome. Their majesties laid the first stone of the magnificent edifice, the church of Ste. Croix, and munificently contributed to the building fund. They then took up their abode at Fontainebleau, where ambassadors from Venice arrived to compliment their majesties on their marriage. During the wars of the League the republic lent the king a million sterling: it was therefore supposed that the envoys before their departure would present the bond, and request repayment of the loan. At the conclusion of their oration, one of the ambassadors handed to the king a small coffer, while his colleague tendered a key. Henry immediately opened the box, and found therein his bond for the million, cancelled by the munificent Seignory. The king, enchanted at so delicate a compliment, drew his sword, and waving it aloft, exclaimed— "Ventre St. Gris! behold my sword, Messieurs—

which will be always at the service of your illustrious and most noble republic!"[1]

Madame and her father-in-law, the duke de Lorraine, subsequently met her brother at Monceaux—
—which was the first time that Henry had made sojourn in the château since the demise of Gabrielle d'Estrées. Madame was convalescent; but afflicted by the absence of her husband—who, fearing the reproaches of the king, feigned sickness to avoid leaving Nancy. A great friendship immediately arose between the queen and Madame: the duchess sympathized with Marie; and joined with her majesty in deploring the absence of principle and *bienséance* in the king's character. The queen was lavish in her admiration of the beautiful gardens and park of Monceaux, planned by the duchess de Beaufort, and bequeathed by her to César-Monsieur. Henry, though he had confirmed this donation made to his son, yet promised the queen to present the château and grounds to her, provided that she gave birth to a dauphin. Madame, if she remembered her brother's pathetic letter on the demise of his beloved Gabrielle, wherein he wrote, "The root of my love is withered; never can it revive!" must have smiled to hear him complacently despoil the son of his mother's favourite abode.

Leaving the queen in the society of Madame, Henry made progress to Paris, and from thence to Calais. The war in the Low Countries excited the ardour of the king; and the vicinity of the hostile armies rendered the royal presence desirable on the frontier. The archdukes were then besieging Ostend —and this celebrated siege, which commenced July

[1] This anecdote was related by Louis XIV. to the duke de la Rochefoucault.

4, 1601, absorbed the attention and sympathies of Europe. The sovereigns Albert and Isabel were present in camp; while prince Maurice had laid siege to Bolduc, the most important stronghold of Brabant. The journey of king Henry excited the suspicion of the Spanish government; who feared that, in concert with the queen of England, his majesty might avenge the perfidy he had experienced during the recent campaign, by covertly affording aid to the besieged. This fear was increased by news that Elizabeth had arrived at Dover, and intended to confer personally with Henri Quatre. The queen, it was known, had exhorted Henry not to conclude peace at Lyons; but to pursue and hamper Spanish policy, until the pernicious preponderance of that cabinet in Europe had been overthrown. Philip and his ministers, moreover, were conscious of many misdemeanours testifying their ill-will towards the king of France; and which the latter had reason to resent. A serious assault had lately been made on the person of the nephew of the French ambassador, M. de la Roche, and several members of his embassy, which was still under adjudication in Madrid—though with little chance of redress for the injured. La Roche and several gentlemen were bathing in a piece of water abutting on the grounds of El Pardo, when several Spanish cavaliers came up, and began to insult the bathers, calling them opprobrious names—such as, *Franceses bellacos, borrachos, e maladettos Luteranos!* The French gentlemen resenting such epithets, and replying in the same style of vituperation, the Spaniards seized the clothes of the former, and cast them into the water. A conflict ensued with swords, which terminated in the flight of some of the Spaniards, and

the death of other of the cavaliers. The friends of the noblemen slain immediately asked for vengeance, and appealed to the justice of the king. The abode of the French ambassador was thereupon stormed; his doors broken open by the Spanish alguazils, and the offenders arrested, without regard to the rights of ambassadors, or the courtesies due to a friendly power.[1] Representations were vainly addressed to the Spanish council; and the affair finally terminated by the withdrawal of the French embassy, and the suspension of relations between the two countries. When Henry was at Calais the grievance was still under examination by commissioners; nevertheless, the Spaniards showed intense distrust of the motive of the king in approaching so near to the camp of the archduke. Albert, therefore, deputed an ambassador, the count de Solre, to wait upon Henry, and, under pretext of presenting the felicitations of their imperial highnesses on the approaching *accouchement* of queen Marie, to penetrate the true design of Henry's visit to Calais — a compliment returned by his majesty, who sent the duke d'Aiguillon to thank the archduke.

Queen Elizabeth, meantime, anxiously desired to confer with the king, and set out for Dover, having first despatched Lord Edmonds with letters to his majesty stating her wish. The political condition of Europe filled the queen with foreboding. Every monarchy was menaced, or troubled by the intrigues of Spain and Austria. Through her faithful ally Henry, the queen had been admonished of the intrigue afloat in the papal and Spanish cabinets, to

[1] Journal de Henri IV. Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat. Mathieu, t. 2. Bentivoglio—Relationi delle provincie Unite di Flandra, lib. 11, p. 84.

transfer the crown of England at her death from the king of Scotland to Lady Arabella Stuart; after effecting the marriage of the latter with the brother of the duke of Parma. This design was conducted with dexterity, and sounded a plausible project to the champions of the orthodox faith; for the young prince Farnese was lineally descended from John of Gaunt,[1] and inherited the military abilities of his father, duke Alessandro. The prolonged contest of the states of Holland with Spain, and the dominance of the latter power throughout Italy, were likewise subjects upon which Elizabeth desired to confer. The queen believed that the only means to overcome and effectually to neutralize these projects was the renewal of the alliance offensive and defensive between the two crowns. Elizabeth also desired to confide the outline of a grand political scheme to her faithful ally, with the view of restoring an equal balance of power, and liberty of conscience, to the nations of Europe. On her arrival at Dover, the queen despatched Sidney with fresh letters to Henry: her majesty it appears felt disappointed not to have been greeted by the king in person, after the gracious intimation which she had given him of her desire for a conference. Henry was at first disposed to cross the channel; but various importunate persons counselled his majesty not to trust himself in the realm of his loving ally, for that his liberty might be endangered, and restored only after the surrender of Calais to the English; or after the abrogation of the treaties of Cateau Cambrésis and Vervins: in short, the

[1] Through his mother, Marie de Guimaraens, who was lineally descended from Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt duke of Lancaster, and consort of John I. king of Portugal. D'Ossat enters at length into this intrigue in his celebrated letters.

sudden fervour shown by Elizabeth to obtain an interview, it was pretended, might, if gratified, give umbrage to the queen, and to madame la Marquise![1] The English counsellors, on the other hand, represented to queen Elizabeth that she might be captured by the Spanish fleet cruising off Ostend: moreover, that the weather was so boisterous that the passage across the channel would probably be perilous. Elizabeth, therefore, wrote the following letter—the last paragraph of which she hoped might pique the curiosity of Henry IV., and induce him to visit her; or at least, to send some confidential personage, perhaps M. de Rosny, to Dover:—

Queen Elizabeth to Henri IV.

"MONSIEUR, MY VERY DEAR AND BELOVED BROTHER—I had hitherto considered that the fate of sovereigns was more happy, and less subject to contradiction, than that of their subjects. Our abode so near to each other, however, begins to make me believe that high personages, as well as those of mediocre condition, are also beset with thorns and difficulties—as, rather to satisfy others than to perform our own will, we are each prevented from crossing the sea which separates us. I had promised myself the felicity of embracing you, as your very loyal sister and faithful ally—you who are my very dear brother, and the personage whom I most love and revere in the world: for to confide to you the secret of my thoughts, I admire the incomparable virtue of your majesty, your valour, and your gentle courtesy to ladies. I had also an important communication to make, which I cannot write, or confide

[1] The extreme anxiety evinced by the queen to meet Henri IV. caused the fabrication of endless mendacious reports, all more or less distinguished for improbability and indecency. "Le roy de France a le gout trop fin pour courir après une vieille," was the conclusion generally arrived at by Henry's subjects.

to any of my own servants, or of your own. Therefore, hoping for another more propitious season, I have resolved to return to London in a few days. I pray God, my dear and beloved brother, to continue to you His holy grace and benedictions.

"From your affectionate sister, and true ally,

"ELIZABETH."[1]

After perusing this missive, Henry sent for Rosny, who had just arrived from Paris. "See!" exclaimed his majesty, "here is a letter from my good sister the queen of England, whom you admire so greatly. It is fuller of flattery than ever! Can you divine what she wishes to impart by the latter portion of her letter?" Rosny perused the letter, and declared that the communication must be important, and necessary to ascertain; and proposed to sail for Dover the following morning. This excursion he represented might be stated as undertaken out of curiosity alone—the queen would doubtless be apprized of his landing, and as he had no official communication to make, her majesty could please herself whether she noticed his visit. The next morning, therefore, Rosny went on board, and landed at Dover at ten o'clock. He was recognized and greeted, on stepping ashore, by Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh; and subsequently by the Earls of Devon and Pembroke. Rosny put on a disconcerted air on being accosted by these noblemen; and prayed them, for the love of heaven, not to mention his landing to queen Elizabeth, as he had visited Dover for private recreation; and was not in fitting garb to salute the most illustrious sovereign of Europe.[2] He then abruptly took leave of these

[1] Sully, liv. 12ème. Lettres Missives de Henri IV.—Berger de Xivrey. Journal de Henri IV.

[2] "Tous ces messieurs reprirent en riant que j'avais pris une

lords, declaring he should embark again after eating a morsel, as he had hoped to keep his incognito. The captain of the guard-ship in port, however, hastened to let his royal mistress know that the illustrious Rosny had just landed on her shores. The latter, therefore, had no sooner entered the lodging provided for him, than Elizabeth's captain of the body-guard entered, and clasping Rosny round the body, jestingly arrested him in the name of the queen! "The said officer had orders to conduct me to her majesty's presence without delay. When the queen beheld me she exclaimed, 'What, M. de Rosny, is this the way you scale our fences, and try to avoid saluting us? I am surprised, for I believed you bore me sincere regard, and I am not aware that I have given you reason to change your sentiments!'" Rosny excused himself to the queen's satisfaction; soon the great sovereign and the astute minister were absorbed in converse. Elizabeth fully explained her policy and designs to the most confidential and able of her "good brother's" servants. Her words enraptured Rosny, who marvelled at "the genius, the lights, and the vigorous understanding displayed by this great princess, who was worthy to be the ally of Henry." He declares that he cannot sufficiently marvel that these two sovereigns, without personal communication, had mentally devised the same line of policy! The first point of discussion was an inquiry, on the part of the queen, whether Henry had relinquished the policy traced in 1596, when he tried, through Ancel and M. de Bongars, to form a league

précaution inutile; et que je devais m'attendre à voir bientôt un messager de la reine, qui ne me laisserait pas aller de la sorte, n'y ayant que trois jours qu'elle avait parlé publiquement de moi, et dans des termes très obligeans," liv. 12ème.

of Protestant princes against the overwhelming power of Spain and Austria? Rosny replied in the negative; but stated that the king, since that period, had been involved in difficulties which compelled him to defend himself at home; that great preparations were needful for a campaign of the magnitude contemplated, in which France was to play the chief military *rôle*. "True, M. de Rosny," replied Elizabeth; "but if our project be realized, and we agree to reduce the dominions of the house of Austria, the allies must each covenant not to appropriate territory which shall menace or disquiet the others. For instance, if Spain is deprived of the Low Countries, that territory must not be appropriated by the kings of France, Scotland, Sweden, or Denmark—for each of these powers is already strong enough, by land and sea, to rouse the jealousy of the rest of the allies by such increase of territory. If the king of France, my brother, were to appropriate, or even take to himself suzerainty over the Seven United Provinces, I do not wish to conceal from you that I should conceive a violent jealousy; nor should I take it ill did the king manifest a similar susceptibility relative to myself." The queen proceeded to discuss the details of a stupendous scheme for remodelling Europe. Elizabeth proposed to restore to Germany its Golden Bull and ancient privileges of electing the emperor and a king of the Romans; to render the Seven Provinces independent of Spain, and to erect a powerful republic by the addition of certain provinces to be dismembered from the empire; to construct a similar republic of Switzerland, adding the provinces of the Tyrol, Franche-Comté, and Alsace: to equalize the power and territories of the chief European states—to whit, by depriving Spain of the

Indies; by adding the Lombard Provinces to the dominions of Savoy and Piedmont; by giving Sicily to the Venetians; and by making Naples an independent kingdom.[1] Finally, to suppress all worship in Europe except that prescribed by the three dominant religious creeds, which were to be tolerated universally. The designs of Elizabeth and her ally have most of them been since realized: it is, however, no slight homage to render to the genius of these great personages, that projects which two centuries and a half ago were discussed by them, have been with various modifications adopted by the succeeding statesmen of Europe. Elizabeth unfortunately was too old to hope to behold the first step towards the realization of her vast designs: while Henri Quatre, beset by treasonable combinations when through his victories France harboured no foreign foe, and not finding a congenial ally in Elizabeth's successor, was himself struck by death when about to take the initiative in a policy which would have revolutionized Europe.

The interview over, Rosny privately returned to Calais, and reported to his master the incidents of this important conference. The design always haunted Rosny: his levies of men and finances, his counsels and foreign policy, ever tended to its accomplishment. The greatest secrecy was observed; and an embassy was nominated by the king to proceed to London, to thank and compliment Elizabeth for her invitation, lest it should be imagined that M. de Rosny had holden official conference with the queen. The duke de Biron was selected for this mission: if favours could have won the unstable spirit of the marshal, or have elicited one throb of

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 12, and 14ème.

gratitude, the generosity of the king must have worked that miracle. From the period of Biron's partial confession in the Franciscan cloister of Lyons, he had been courted as if Henry desired to atone for the shame and mortification resulting from that avowal. He was eventually permitted to return to Bourg and receive the capitulation of the fortress; the colonelcy of a famous regiment was given him; the king frequently corresponded with him, and once more renewed the offer of bestowing upon him his daughter by Gabrielle d'Estrées. Every favour seemed to harden the envious heart of Biron, whose temper was now so irritable that he could not brook the expression of a difference of opinion even on minor matters, while his gusts of anger terrified his subordinates. The duke, however, graciously consented to visit the English court,[1] and arrived in Calais about the 5th day of September, 1601, from whence he sailed on the 7th, accompanied by the count d'Auvergne and a retinue of 150 gentlemen.

Henry frequently corresponded with the queen during his sojourn at Calais. Marie wrote that during her retirement at Fontainebleau she was perusing Plutarch. To this Henry replied: "M'amye, I write to you on the sea—the weather is so fine that coasting is pleasant. Vive Dieu! you could not have sent me more agreeable information than that you take pleasure in such reading. Plutarch ever smiles upon me, and arrays himself in the garb of novelty: to love Plutarch is to love myself; for he was the teacher of my youth. My good mother, to whom I owe everything, and who watched my

[1] The king gave Biron a sum of 100,000 francs for the expenses of his equipment; his majesty also assigned the ambassador a pension of 100 crowns a day.

inclinations with intense affection, not wishing, she said, to be the mother of a royal blockhead, put this book into my hands when I was yet an infant. Plutarch has been to me as a conscience; and has whispered in my ear many maxims excellent for the government of my conduct morally as well as politically."[1]

On the 14th of September, Henry returned to Fontainebleau to be present at the *accouchement* of his consort. Marie, accompanied by Madame de Bar, and attended by the duchess de Nemours, madame de Guercheville, madame de Montglat, whom the king nominated to the office of *gouvernante des enfans de France*, and Eleonore Galigai, had taken up her abode at the château about the end of August. The health of the queen was excellent; she drove daily in the forest, and amused herself with musical instruments, and by attempts to talk theology with Madame, her majesty having been incited thereto by cardinal du Perron. As the period of Marie's delivery drew near, the heart and prayers of the nation were with her; and the birth of a dauphin was hoped for, as an appropriate termination of the past era of anarchy, and as a pledge of future tranquillity. The queen was seized with labour-pains at midnight, on the 27th of September, 1601, and continued ill for twenty-two hours. But for her courage and robust health, the ordeal might have proved fatal. The chief surgeons and physicians of the realm waited in the royal anteroom; but Marie refused to accept the services of any person but the midwife whom she herself had previously selected, with the character-

[1] MS. Collection de M. Feuillet de Conches—Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

istic observation, "I choose the services of madame Boursier. I am never deceived in any person I select; let her attend me." The solicitude of the king was intense, and he never left the apartment of his consort. The lying-in chamber of the queen was the celebrated Chambre Ovale, in the palace of Fontainebleau: there were present at the birth of the child, the king, Madame, the duchess de Nemours, the duke de Montpensier, the Count de Soissons and the prince de Conty, princes of the blood. The adjacent *cabinet de la reine* was occupied by the ministers and other high personages. The saloon was filled by ladies, and personages of the household of the princes. Louis XIII. was born at half-past ten at night—the child was supposed at first to be lifeless;[1] but the skill and coolness of madame Boursier, who justified

[1] "La reyne etant accouchée je mis M. le Dauphin dans mon giron sans que personne sceust que moi quel enfant c'etoit. Le roy vint auprès de moi; je regarde l'enfant au visage, et je vis une grande foiblesse. Je demande du vin de M. de Lozeray, l'un des valets de chambre du roy; il apporta une bouteille. Je lui demande une cuillier; le roy print la bouteille. Je lui dis!—'Sire, si c'etait un autre enfant je meterois du vin dans la bouche et lui en donnerois, de peur que la foiblesse dure trop.' Le roy me mit la bouteille contre la bouche et me dit. 'Faites comme à un autre!' Je vis le roy triste et changé d'autant qu'il ne savoit quel enfant c'estoit." Madame Boursier then relates how she gave the signal agreed upon to the first *femme de chambre* to inform his majesty of the birth of a dauphin. "La couleur revint au roy; il se baissa, et mit la bouche contre mon oreille et me demanda. 'Sage-femme, est ce un fils?' Je luy dit que oui. 'Je vous prie ne me donnez point de courte joie; cela me fera mourir!' Le roy leva les yeux au Ciel: les larmes lui couloient sur la face aussi grosses que de gros pois," etc.—Des Naissances de Messeigneurs et Dames les Enfans de France, par Louise Boursier, Sage Femme de la Reyne; à Paris, 1652.

the queen's preference, averted this calamity.[1] "Tears ran down the cheeks of the king when he heard that a dauphin was born," relates madame Boursier, in her interesting narrative. "He asked me whether I had told the queen? I replied no—but that I begged his majesty to do so, but with precaution. The king then went, and embraced the queen and said, 'M'amye, you have suffered much; but God has blessed us—we have a son.' Her majesty clasped her hands, a few tears escaped, and she fainted away." The room was then cleared; the king, taking the dauphin in his arms, exhibited him to the personages in the adjacent apartments. M. Herouard, first physician, then took possession of the little prince, and escorted him, lying in the arms of madame de Montglat, to his apartment. The transports were great.[2] People embraced each other, weeping for joy. All night the town of Fontainebleau celebrated the event by fireworks, bonfires, music and feastings. Barrels of wine were emptied in the court of the château in honour of the king, queen, and M. le Dauphin; and couriers were despatched to carry the transporting news to every province in the realm. The following day early, visits to the apartments of the dauphin re-commenced and lasted till dusk-hour. The little César de Vendôme, who had been *l'enfant gaté de la cour*, was found by one of the queen's women clinging to the

[1] Eloges des Dauphins de France, par le P. Hilarion de Coste—Eloge de Louis—XVIII. dauphin de France.

[2] "L'allegresse etait si grande que le roy Henri IV. pressé de congratulations de ceux qui l'environnoient, qu'en passant pour aller à l'Eglise du château rendre graces à la Divine Majesté d'un si grand benefice, son chapeau demeura parmi la presse."—Ibid.

tapestry portal leading to the young prince's chamber, and crying bitterly. "Monsieur, what are you doing—and what ails you?" "Nobody speaks to me now; yesterday, everybody answered me, and to-day they say I may not go in there!" sobbed the child, pointing to the door of the queen's apartment. When Marie was informed of the affliction of her little favourite, she ordered that M. de Vendôme should be amused, and allowed to see M. le Dauphin when he liked, and go out to ride in the forest.[1] Marie soon became convalescent. Two days after the birth of the dauphin, the king, writing to the marquis de Rosny, says: "It is wonderful to behold how well my wife is. She can dress her hair, and talks to-day of rising from her bed! Her constitution is marvellously strong!"[2] In the same letter Henry commands Rosny to prepare the necessary deeds for transferring to the queen the castle of Monceaux. Henry, however, purchased the château from César-Monsieur; and ordered Rosny to invest the money for the benefit of the prince. For several weeks after the birth of the dauphin the town of Fontainebleau kept festival: people from the extremity of France journeyed to gaze enraptured upon "M. le Dauphin, as he lay asleep in his cradle of fine filigree work, presented by madame the grand duchess Christine." The details of his nursery establishment were discussed by the gravest personages, and approved, with the exception of the appointment of the wet-

[1] "Voilà pour faire mourir ce pauvre enfant; c'est que chacun s'amuse avec mon fils, et que l'on ne pense pas à lui; cela est bien estrange à cet enfant!" said her majesty.—Recit de Louise Boursier, Accoucheuse.

[2] Mém. de Sully, edit. original, t. 2.

nurse, who was "one Poncet, the daughter of a devout *Liguese*, named Hotman, who had been entitled La Mêre des Seize." The bells of Paris rang; a *Te Deum* was chanted, which was attended by the authorities and notable personages of the capital. Discharges of cannon boomed over the capital at intervals for two days from the Arsenal, the loyal abode of M. de Rosny; a grand procession was organized to perambulate the streets of Paris—and the indigent of the capital were feasted in the vicinity of the Hôtel de Ville. The congratulations of foreign potentates were likewise profuse—as also from the princes absent on service, whom king Henry complimented by sending them expresses to notify the felicitous event."[1] Queen Marguerite also despatched Berthier, from her dreary abode of Usson, to congratulate their majesties. "Monseigneur, the welfare of the realm makes every good Frenchman rejoice at this event—but I claim especial right and fervour of congratulation, and return to God a thousand thousand thanks that He has been pleased to give your majesty a son."[2] The resignation with which Marguerite submitted to her position, and the gracious cordiality which she evinced towards the princess who occupied her place and state, enlist the strongest pity. A noble and generous spirit shines beneath Marguerite's moral delinquencies; and it would have fared better with Marie de Medici had she emulated the example of

[1] Henry sent M. la Forest to the marquis de Rosny; M. de St. Julien to the marshal de Lesdiguières; M. la Varrene to the Parliament of Paris; and M. de Faultry, under-secretary of state, to the constable de Montmorency.

[2] Bibl. Imp. MS. Dupuy, t. 217, fol. 64. Guessard—Lettres de Marguerite de Valois.

magnanimity set by her predecessor. In Rome the birth of the dauphin occasioned great rejoicing. The pope sent for d'Ossat to felicitate him, and to express the hope "that from the union of their Christian majesties sons might spring glorious as Charlemagne, who would purge France from the poison of heresy, and also all neighbouring countries!" His holiness deputed Maffeo Barberini to proceed to France, to convey his Apostolic benisbn to queen Marie and to her infant son; and to present, for the use of the latter, a magnificent *layette* blessed by the pope—a custom long observed on the birth of the heirs of France and Spain.[1] The little prince was privately baptized at Fontainebleau, by the archbishop of Bourges, the day but one after his birth. The ceremony of the state baptism was deferred until the dauphin was old enough to attend to the religious instructions of his chaplain—a decision arising partly from the theological opinions of his majesty on the subject; and partly from Henry's disgust at the ungracious refusal of the grand-duke to accept the office of godfather to the dauphin. The feelings of the grand-duke were greatly modified respecting his alliance with Henri IV.; the advantages which he hoped thereby to derive were rendered doubtful by the feuds of the court, and the uncertainty of the queen's temper; also he resented the treatment to which his envoy Giovannini continued to be subject. Moreover, duke Ferdinand felt chagrin at the conclusion of peace; he disapproved the exchange made by the king of Saluzzo for the county of Bresse, which exposed the Italian princes who had espoused Henry's quarrel to the

[1] Hilarion de Coste—Eloge de Louis—XVIII. dauphin de France.—Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat.

resentment of Spain. The grand-duke, therefore, unwisely resolved to give proof to the Spanish cabinet that he was not devoted, as was supposed, to French interests, by refusing the honour tendered by king Henry, on the plausible plea that the canons of the church forbade a child to have two godfathers.[1] Pope Clement accepted the office; the godmother of the dauphin was the duchess of Mantua, sister of the queen.

During the month of October M. le Dauphin was removed to St. Germain en Laye. The municipality of Paris incurred much well-merited ridicule by pronouncing a solemn harangue to the infant prince as he passed through Paris. Madame de Montglat made reply, standing by the dauphin, who lay asleep in his sumptuous cradle.[2] Three weeks after the birth of the dauphin a son was born to madame la Marquise, at Verneuil.[3] The king sent La Rivière his physician, but did not visit his mistress—an omission which brought an angry series of letters from Henriette.

This same month of October was also memorable for another attempt to compel the abjuration of the duchesse de Bar, at the solicitation of her husband,

[1] "Il Re avea richiesto per compari il papa e il gran-duca, e per comare la duchessa de Montova; si scuso Ferdinando dall'accetiare questo carico, e per guistificazione de suo refiuto addresse la disposizione del concilio che proibiva l'elezione di due compari. Con la publica ostentazione di compare del Delfino, il G-duca non volea cadere in nuovi sospetti del Re Filippo nel punto istesse che erano più forti le speranze de reconciliarsi con il medesimo."—Galluzzi—Istoria del Granducato.

[2] Godefroy—Grand Cérem. de France, t. 2.

[3] This son the king named Gaston de Foix, in honour of his renowned ancestor of that name. At the confirmation of the prince this appellation was abandoned for that of Henry.

who wrote abject letters to the king, the sum of which was, "*qu'il etait damné*," unless Henry's interposition availed with Madame. The witty and learned du Perron had been frequently the guest of the king since the arrival of the duchess: Madame enjoyed his *bon-mots* and erudite disquisitions, and seemed at one time not averse to sanction a religious conference. Du Perron's influence was jealously watched by the duke of Bouillon, who, since his alliance with the house of Nassau, made still more intolerant profession of Calvinism. The Huguenots of France, remembering the blow dealt them in the conference summoned to test the accuracy of the treatise composed by M. de Mornay, shrank from the project of again meeting du Perron in debate. "Madame," said Bouillon abruptly to the duchess, "if you are minded to leave us, seek the instructions of M. du Perron! Conferences we will have no more of: they damage the church!" Tears filled the eyes of Madame as she replied, "that she had no intention to leave the communion of the reformed church: that M. du Perron was learned and delightful in converse; and that she, who had so few friends, could not afford to reject overtures of amity." [1]

Amongst martyrs faithful to the inspirations of conscience, Catherine d'Albret may claim a palm: her persecutions were sharp and prolonged. Every worldly prosperity and inducement prompted her to abandon the reformed faith; and every persuasion and preference was brought to bear on the question. Her faith was represented as the barrier which deprived her of fraternal love, conjugal felicity, and regal honours. Neither was the merit of constancy conceded to the duchess, despite the sacrifices

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

she had made for conscience sake. The letter which she had written to the pope, in a moment of exasperation, offering to abjure if his holiness would sanction her marriage with Soissons, was always quoted as a proof that obstinate inflexibility of temper, and not conviction, was the obstacle to her recantation. The king, in the altercations which perpetually occurred, invariably adopted this view, and wounded Madame by his taunts. The king's reproaches became the more vivid, as his fear was confirmed that M. de Bar, really driven to the verge of insanity by compunction of conscience, would rather incur any peril of the royal resentment than suffer his marriage with Madame to subsist. "I am well informed that M. de Bar intends to repudiate you, unless your stubborn temper yields," said the king. "I will not be called brother by a divorced woman; and, Ventre St. Gris! Madame, when such event happens, you shall find no refuge in my dominions!" "Sire," replied the duchess, humbly, "when you forsake me, God will protect me. I trust in Him—I had rather be poor, miserable, and despised in this world, than be denied by Christ my Saviour, in that which is to come, in the presence of God, before whom all the crowns of earth are but as dust!"[1] Henry thereupon embraced his sister with tears, and applauded her rejoinder: "but," relates the chronicler, "many have been grievously deceived by these tears shed by his majesty." It was decreed, however, that Madame should have a cessation from harassing discussion for the space of ten months, during which period she agreed diligently to peruse the theological works of du Perron.[2] The relief was timely: Ma-

[1] MS. Bibl. Imp. Suppl. fr. 1644.

[2] Ibid.—When the princess quitted the court to return to

dame's health was daily becoming more precarious—her days were spent in prayers and tears, and in soothing the plaints of the miserable prince who called her wife; and whose frantic alternations of tenderness and of horror rendered her, to use the words of Catherine, "the most unhappy woman of Christendom!"

At the court of queen Elizabeth, meanwhile, the duke de Biron was courted and flattered in measure equal to his own appreciation of his merits and dignity. The duke landed at Dover, and was received magnificently, and escorted by noble personages sent by the queen to London. Two days after the arrival of the duke, Elizabeth granted him audience at her palace of Greenwich. The ceremonial was elaborate, and prepared as if the queen comprehended the character of the ambassador. The duke was first conducted to a saloon in which many chief noble English matrons were assembled; from this chamber he passed into a second apartment, occupied by the maidens of the court—and in a third, Biron was saluted by some of the more elderly and venerable ladies of the realm. The ambassador was preceded by his 150 gentlemen, each cavalier marching with a lord of the English court. In the adjoining apartment Elizabeth sat on a throne, surrounded by her ministers and household. A *fauteuil* was placed on her majesty's right, a step lower, evidently intended for Henry's ambassador. "Eh, M. de Biron!" ex-

Nancy, "M. d'Evreux (du Perron) prenant congé d'elle lui presenta le livre qu'il lui avait promis, à la charge de le voir, et ne le montrer à personne. Montant dans son carrosse madame le mit dans son manchon. Le roi reconduisit Madame jusque'a Brie Comte-Robert, M. de Lorraine son beau-père s'en alla tout faschè et mal-content."—MS.

claimed her majesty, "so you have taken the trouble to visit a poor old woman, who has nothing to recompense you in return except by the strong affection she bears to your king, and her power to appreciate the merits of a good servant like yourself!" Elizabeth then embraced the duke, who presented his sovereign's letter, which the queen handed to Cecil, and desired him to read aloud. Her majesty then made a short speech, eulogizing the virtues of the Christian king. Biron was then commanded to introduce M. le Comte d'Auvergne, who the queen was apprized had joined the ambassador's suite *incognito*. M. d'Auvergne thereupon advanced, and with a low obeisance said, "Madame, behold the individual whom you deign so to honour; and who is inspired with unspeakable veneration for the sacred person of your majesty." This address greatly pleased the queen, who termed it apt, and worthy of the son of her late dear and faithful ally, king Charles IX. Elizabeth then led Biron apart, and conversed with him for some time, standing in the embrasure of a window.[1] She next asked for the marquis de Crequy,[2] son-in-law of the marshal de Lesdiguières. "Monseigneur," said the queen graciously, while Crequy inclined before her, "be assured, and report the fact, that if my dear brother the Christian king had two Lesdiguières, I should petition him to grant me the services of one!" The English nobility, at the desire of their queen, gave

[1] "La royne s'apperceut bien qu'il ne voulait s'asseoir dans une des chaises basses qu'elle avoit aux côtés de la sienne pour ne prendre place indigne de la grandeur de son maître."—Cayet—Chron. Septennaire.

[2] The marquis de Crequy had espoused the daughter, and eventually the heiress, of the marshal de Lesdiguières.

magnificent entertainments to the French lords.[1] Biron was entertained at Windsor and at Richmond palace. He was also frequently admitted to audience by the queen. Elizabeth freely discussed political events with the marshal; and condescended to discourse on the late rebellion and decapitation of the Earl of Essex. Biron ventured to deplore the rigour of the earl's sentence after such long and arduous service, while examining a portrait of Essex in enamel, which the queen took from a casket. Elizabeth condescended to answer what Rosny terms "un discours si impertinent," thus:—"I raised the earl of Essex to the highest dignity and favour. He audaciously abused my condescension, and fancied that his services were indispensable. His prosperity rendered him haughty, and perfidious, and criminal in degree as he simulated loyal virtue. He suffered righteously; and the king my brother would do well to act in Paris as I have done in London. He ought to deliver up to condign justice every traitor and rebel of his realm. I pray heaven that the clemency of your prince may not be fatal to him; for myself, I never pardon any individual who dares to disturb the peace of my realm!" De Thou and other historians state that this conversation passed at an open window, from whence the Tower could be seen and the gibbet over London Bridge on which the head of Essex was impaled: by other contemporary writers it is asserted that the queen was then entertaining Biron, and several of the principal French cavaliers, at Basing, the seat of the marquis of Winchester. The words of the queen were ominous when ad-

[1] Mathieu, liv. 2, who gives a minute detail of the ambassage; also Camden, part 4th. Leti—Vita d'Elisabetta Regina d'Ingleterra, p. 4067, et seq.

dressed to the marshal, especially after her confidential conference with M. de Rosny. The projects of the dukes de Bouillon and de la Tremouille, with whom Biron was about to league, were suspected by Elizabeth from her *liaison* with the republic of Holland, and its chieftains of Nassau. The ambassadors took leave of the queen on the 3rd of October,[1] gratified by munificent presents. Biron received the queen's portrait set with diamonds; a standard worth 3,000 crowns; and four fleet horses. He journeyed to Fontainebleau to give account of his mission; and after saluting the young dauphin at St. Germain, the marshal departed for his government of Burgundy, apparently penetrated by the goodness of his royal master. Rosny was absent at this period in Gascony, whither he had repaired partly to use the mud baths of Barbotau for the benefit of his health; and partly to investigate the origin of certain rumours relative to the proceedings of M. de Biron in that locality, from whence the duke's family originated.

When queen Marie and madame de Verneuil were convalescent they met in Paris, still on friendly terms. The queen came to the Louvre in November, 1601, on the occasion of the arrival of the ambassador of the duke de Savoy to ratify the peace of Lyons, which was celebrated by a series of brilliant fêtes. The facility of the queen was taken advantage of for fresh enterprises subversive of her dignity. The hôtel of madame la Marquise was in the vicinity of the Louvre; nevertheless, the king, find-

[1] "Un jour M. de Biron etant à Basing le Milord Cobham le fit entrer avec quatre on cinq de nous par une porte derobée dans sa chambre, pour la surprendre lors qu'elle chantait."—Mém. de Bassompierre, p. 80, et seq.—ses Observations sur l'histoire de M. Dupleix.

ing it irksome to repair thither as often as he wished to be made merry by the wit of his mistress, proposed that Henriette should have a suite of apartments in the Louvre, adjacent to those of her majesty. This scandalous arrangement was effected with the assent of the queen; whose weak concessions certainly rendered her subsequent rigorous hate towards madame de Verneuil unexpected, as it was then injudicious. Eleonore Galigai expected the return of her *fiancé* Concini; and until her marriage was accomplished it was necessary to flatter the mistress. Towards the end of December the queen gave a fête of splendour unprecedented since the palmy days of the regency of Catherine de Medici. It consisted of a *ballet* danced by the queen herself, masqued, and by fifteen of the most beautiful ladies of her court. Music and singing accompanied the movements of the dancers. The subject of the pageant was the glory of king Henry, *Pacificateur de l'Europe;* the words were composed by Berthier, bishop of Séez; and each verse ended with the refrain—

"Il faut que tout vous rende hommage,
Grand Roi! miracle de votre age!"[1]

Amongst the ladies chosen were mademoiselle de Guise, the young duchesse de Nevers, the lovely mademoiselle de Vertus, afterwards duchesse de Montbazon, the countess d'Auvergne, the duchesses de Ventadour and de Montpensier, and madame de Verneuil. The king and madame la Marquise were so enraptured with this condescension on the part of the queen, that Henry authorized madame de Ver-

[1] Vie d'Henriette de Balzac marquise de Vernueil—Dreux de Radier. This ballet is mentioned by the gravest contemporary historians as something marvellous, even by M. de Thou.

neuil to intimate his consent to the marriage of La Galigai on the return of her *fiancé*; and, moreover, granted the post of *chevalier d'honneur*, demanded for Concini. In the first act of the memorable ballet, Apollo entered attended by the nine Muses, who danced, and alternately deposited wreaths of laurel at the feet of the king. The second scene was a dance, representing the intricate evolutions of a battle, led by madame de Verneuil. In the final act the queen appeared as Venus, attended by her nymphs, and preceded by the little duke de Vendôme, attired as Cupid. "The diamonds with which the stately figure of her majesty was beset, scintillated with such extraordinary brilliancy that no spectacle had before equalled it." The fair attendants of the queen performed to the admiration of the spectators. The king evinced his pleasure by frequent applause; and, addressing the papal nuncio,[1] his majesty asked whether he had ever witnessed a more brilliant and beautiful scene? "*Bellissimo e pericolosissimo!*" responded the prudent prelate emphatically.

In order not to lose the benefit of the king's acquiescence by perilous delays, Donna Eleonore despatched letters to Concini, announcing that the royal assent to their union was obtained; and recalling him forthwith from England. In vain Giovannini once more ventured, at the command of the duke of Tuscany, to warn the queen of the folly of her proceedings. His counsels were rejected with contumely:[2] Marie fancied herself omnipotent, now that a fair young dauphin abided at St. Germain.

[1] Bishop of Camarino.

[2] "Giovannini intieramente avvilito e disprezzato alla corte implorava dal G-duca il richiamo."—Galluzzi.

Letters of naturalization were granted to Concino Concini;[1] and on his return to Paris, after taking leave of his patron the duke de Bracciano, who was making the tour of Elizabeth's dominions, his marriage with Eleonore Galigaï was celebrated, probably in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The ceremony must have been of a private character, as no detail, beyond the bare record of such marriage, has been transmitted. The temper of the king and of madame la Marquise was uncertain; permission might be revoked; and the ambitious pair, having found *l'heure du berger*, were careful not to risk the forfeit of this advantage. The queen, though she had attained her desires, was disquieted and jealous. Soothed hitherto by the expostulations of her wily *dame d'atours*, the marriage of madame Concini was no sooner effected than Marie repented, as well she might, of having accepted the humiliating patronage of madame la Marquise, and began to show herself sensitive on the indecorum of the abode of the latter in the Louvre. A *mot* of the queen's at this period passed throughout the *salons* of the capital. Attended by madame Concini and others, Marie went to inspect the curiosities of a famous Levantine merchant newly settled in Paris. Amongst other rare articles, the queen was shown a drinking-cup set with carbuncles, which it was said emitted fiery sparks on the approach of poison. Marie examined the magical cup earnestly: "Monsieur," said she presently, addressing the merchant, "if you have a cup which will chase away melancholy,[2] give it to me! I will pay any

[1] Some person asked Concini what he was going to do in France: "Faire fortune!" replied he.

[2] A manuscript chronicler relates that the melancholy of queen Marie proceeded from some words spoken by the king, which,

price; and promise to drink from it daily!"[1] Mortification at her want of real influence with the king was added to the queen's exasperation at the bold wit of Henriette, who, at the convivial meetings of the Hôtels de Gondy and Zamet, called herself now *Reine du Louvre, sinon de la France.* The receptions of the queen—mother of the dauphin—were, it was true, sedulously frequented. A corridor alone separated the saloons of la Marquise from the suite occupied by her royal mistress. When the court was dismissed by her majesty, all flocked to *les nuits* de madame de Verneuil. Every celebrity of Paris was there welcomed by the beautiful hostess; and the revel frequently lasted till daybreak. La Marquise had a sympathizing word for each of her guests, especially for the constable de Montmorency, whose unkind treatment of his newly-married wife[2]—whom he espoused in indecent haste, and then tried to discard, under the pleas of inferiority of birth and illegal performance of the marriage ceremony—elicited the generous indignation of the queen.

During the course of the year 1601 many eminent persons of the court of Henry IV. died. The queen-dowager Louise expired on the 4th of July, after a long illness borne with exemplary resignation. Louise was preceded to the grave by Henriette duchesse de Nevers,[3]

for his honour, it is to be hoped have been exaggerated: "Le roy baise et mignarde fort le fils de madame la marquise, le disant plus beau que celui de la reine sa femme, qu'il disoit ressembler aux Medici, etant noir et gros comme eux!"—MS. Bibl. Imp Suppl. fr. 1644.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Laurence de Clermont, the youthful aunt of the constable's second wife. This affair subsequently occupied the king, as will be seen.

[3] Henriette de Cleves, widow of Louis de Gonzague duke de

one of the most renowned and brilliant personages of the century. The princess dowager of Condé[1] also died in a good age: and on the 27th day of December the princess of Conty[2] demised. Madame de Conty caught the small-pox while journeying to the château de Lucé to negotiate the marriage of her daughter by her first husband, Anne de Montafié, with her husband's half brother, the Count de Soissons. Lastly, the duke de Mercœur, after a brilliant campaign against the Turks in Hungary, during which he re-established his military repute, fell ill, and died at Nuremburg, of malignant fever, February 19, 1602, on his way home. His only daughter, Françoise de Lorraine, the betrothed bride of the king's son, M. de Vendôme, inherited the immense wealth of her father.

Nevers. The duchess Henriette died Sunday June 25th, 1601, of dropsy.

[1] Madame Francoise d'Orleans, widow of Louis prince de Condé, killed at Jarnac.

[2] Jeanne de Coësme, widow of Louis count de Montafié.

CHAPTER IV.

1601—1602.

Rise of a new league—Its objects and abettors—The king resolves to visit the disaffected provinces—Power of M. de Rosny—Measures adopted by the latter to sift the origin of the conspiracy—M. Lafin is ordered to repair to court—Treacherous revelations of the latter—Journey of their majesties to Orléans—Clement intents of Henri Quatre—Rosny appointed governor of the Bastille—Sojourn of the court at Blois—Royal interviews with the dukes d'Epernon and Bouillon—Council extraordinary—Domestic dissensions of the king and queen—Rosny acts as mediator—Occasion of the *fracas*—Reconciliation of the royal pair—Arrival of their majesties at Plessis-les-Tours—Mandate is despatched summoning the attendance at court of the duke de Biron—Enthusiasm for the king—Repeal of the obnoxious tax termed La Pancarte—The marshal de Biron obeys the royal summons—His arrival at Fontainebleau—Details—The king endeavours to extort confession from Biron by the offer of a free pardon—Contumacious refusals of the duke de Biron to acknowledge his treasonable dealings with the duke de Savoye and others—Arrest of the duke de Biron and of the count d'Auvergne—They are conveyed to the Bastille—Interrogatories of the duke de Biron—Efforts on his behalf—Sentence of death pronounced—Sentiments of king Henry on the crime, trial, and execution of the marshal duc de Biron.

Rumours and indications of a menacing nature, relative to the intrigues of the marshal de Biron, and other powerful noblemen, disquieted the court at the commencement of the new year. Through some unknown but sinister agency, the realm, though enjoying the blessing of peace, was agitated. An outward aspect of loyalty prevailed; but, as in the early days of the league, cabals began to be formed in the provinces and towns for the consideration of paltry grievances, which a petition to the executive government would at once have redressed. Reports were circulated, no one knew how, throughout the western districts, that it was contemplated to reduce half the grant appropriated for the maintenance of the Huguenot garrisons, and to curtail the pensions of the ministers of the reformed church; also, to close the avenues to public service against persons aliens from the orthodox creed; innovations subversive of the great charter of Huguenot liberty—the edict of Nantes. The districts most disturbed were Anjou, Saintonge, Perigord, Limousin, Auvergne, and the Blaisois. Mysterious agents appeared in these provinces, exciting the inhabitants to resist the levy of the tax *du sou pour livre;* and promptly to petition against the re-imposition of the vexatious *gabelle*—an impost which it was alleged the council had resolved to add to the burden of the people. Anonymous communications were constantly being made to the king apprizing him of the treachery practised; and of the subtle rise of a new league, which threatened to attain formidable proportions. The chief personages inculpated were Biron, the count d'Auvergne, and the duke de Bouillon; and their sworn though passive abettors were, it was stated, the dukes de la Trimouille, and

d'Epernon. With regard to La Trimouille the accusation had grounds: the duke d'Epernon, however, had in by-gone years been too deeply implicated in similar revolts to engage again rashly; but on the contrary he often admonished Biron that such movements were perilous, and seldom successful. The three first-named personages it appears, as a preliminary to their machinations, bound themselves by a written agreement, of which each kept a copy, to unite for the development of their schemes, *envers et contre tous, sans nul excepter.*[1] Biron and the duke de Bouillon were of temper congenial for such alliance; though the latter greatly excelled Biron in intellect and conduct—as was evidenced when the design exploded by the dexterous manner in which he extricated himself from the snare which proved fatal to his ally. M. d'Auvergne was weak and vicious; and had vowed to avenge the wrongs of his half-sister madame la Marquise. Intelligences were meantime kept up with Spain and Savoy through that untiring enemy of France the condé de Fuentes—while other high personages were admitted to participation in the clauses of the treaty of Como. The better to carry out their projects, agreement being thus made, intercourse with foreign potentates was temporarily dropped. The mission of the confederates was to foment rebellion in the French provinces, by raising a cry for fiscal reform, including the abolition of La Pancarte; and by

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 12ème. "Ils s'engagent de garder le secret inviolablement, et de bruler cet ecrit en cas d'accident à quelqu'un de ses associés. Leurs desseins ne pourraient reussir que par l'operation de l'Espagne et de la Savoie. Ils se servirent de la mutinerie qu'y avait excitée l'etablissement du sou pour livre, et à ce motif ils joignerent celui de la gabelle."

exasperating the fears of the Huguenot population. It was next proposed to seize the towns of Blaye, Bayonne, Narbonne, Marseilles, and Toulon; also St. Fleur, the capital of Auvergne: this accomplished, Biron and his associates might with reason hope soon to find their ambition satiated by the enjoyment of the provinces promised by the catholic king, as the price of their treason against their good and indulgent master. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the exact result at which the malcontents aimed—the three dukes, Biron, Bouillon, and La Trimouille, were men of fierce temper, impatient of control, and not likely to submit permanently to the thrall of a foreign dynasty. The two latter professed the reformed faith; and could not, therefore, advocate the rule of Spain, and the introduction of that important part of her system, the Chambers of Inquisition. Their project, therefore, was identical with that of the constable de Bourbon—the restoration of the great feudal fiefs, and the consequent limitation of the sovereign power. Biron's share was already stipulated—Burgundy with the Lyonnais—Bouillon probably coveted the northern provinces contiguous to his principality of Sédan; he also, doubtless, desired the augmentation of the territory of the House of Nassau, with which he was allied, by the addition of a portion of French Flanders. La Trimouille had hereditary claims on some of the southern provinces. The constable de Montmorency, who was afterwards suspected of collusion, coveted Languedoc; and the duke de Guise, Provence.

The hot and aggressive disposition of the marshal de Biron impelled him to take the initiative in the design, whatever might be its intended limit.

Bouillon, more wary and self-contained, held aloof, and spoke only where his words told and left impression—thus, he never committed himself to overt and useless acts of treason. Biron, on the contrary, was always publicly boasting of his influence, merits, and power with foreign potentates; and seeking to gain adherents by exciting the sordid passions of his hearers. Thus, at the commencement of the year he visited Guyenne and Perigord, under pretext of family concerns; and there was imprudent enough to express open sympathy with the alleged grievances of the people of these provinces in declamatory harangues, which, from the habitual exaggeration of language indulged in by the marshal, led to the conviction that his disaffection was complete. The king, alarmed by the perpetual intimation which he received of these cabals; and beginning now in reality to distrust the loyalty of Biron, resolved to make a progress to the disaffected districts, to discover the cause of discontent and its authors. One M. de Calvairac made a report which seriously disturbed his majesty; who, conscious of no arbitrary designs against the peace of his subjects, refused to believe in the existence of treason so gratuitous. The king quitted Paris for Fontainebleau with the queen and court on the 1st day of April. His majesty was to be followed by Rosny, and together, in council with Villeroy and Bellièvre, final measures of investigation and repression were to be adopted.[1] M. de Rosny had his conjectures, and was prepared to act upon them. Devoted to the king, this astute minister now beheld himself at the summit of power and consideration. One of the grievances of the princes was that the realm

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 12ème.

was governed by the coterie formed of Bellièvre, Villeroy, and Rosny—that the king listened indeed to the advice of his peers, but never acted upon the counsel given, unless approved by Rosny. The latter, from being a humble member of the household, occasionally addressed condescendingly by Mayenne or Montmorency, or made the butt of Sancy's sarcasms, now beheld himself the patron of the house of Lorraine-Guise; the minister whose nod Henry, when in council, always waited; the recipient of the confidential projects of the superb Epernon; and courted by the chief of Rohan, who about this period proposed matrimonial alliance between their children! Rosny attained this altitude by the devotion of every purpose, friendship, and personal advantage to the attainment of one object—his interest was that of the king—his friends were comprised in the single person of the king—and his recreation and sole pursuit, the business of the king. Austere and reserved, Rosny displayed no accessible foible: he despised women; he hated gambling; he wearied of banquets and revels; and grimly submitted to be present at these, and to entertain others, as part and parcel of the burden of office. He had no religious principle—he went to mass with the king, and was ever ready to stay away from *le prêche* at Henry's desire. In his communications with the pope, and with the eminent divines of the day, he adopted without scruple their priestly titles of honour, which rigid Huguenots like Duplessis Mornay sternly rejected; and was as ready to accommodate the acts of his synods to the views of dissentients, as du Perron was to smooth down the canons of Holy Church.

Concini and his wife soon became courtiers of M.

and madame de Rosny: Eleonore begged the influence of the latter to aid in adjusting the palace feuds, and privately to admonish her majesty; while Concini called madame de Rosny *sa maîtresse*, and prided himself on his private consultations at the Arsenal. The delicate manipulation with which Rosny, strong in conscious power, proceeded with the investigation devolving on him is edifying to observe. Rosny considered that an elucidation of Biron's intrigues would give the key of the conspiracy. The misunderstanding between Lafin and the marshal, and the consequent cessation of intercourse between them, had not escaped the vigilant eye of the minister. The nephew of Lafin, the Vidame de Chartres, was an officer of the king's body-guard. To this young nobleman Rosny privately disclosed many of the facts ascertained, so as to convince the Vidame that the treason of M. de Biron was known; and that his uncle could not fail to be fatally compromised, unless he purchased immunity by confession. In short, the alternative of arrest and the torture-chamber of the Bastille, or a visit to Fontainebleau, a frank confession, and letters of abolition under the great seal, were finally offered to M. Lafin. The latter, still under the influence of his resentment for the slights he had received, had little hesitation in repairing to court, there to be relieved of the political incubus which had long oppressed him. Lafin, to render his perfidy more signal, wrote to apprize M. de Biron that he was summoned to conference by the king. He reiterated his assurances that he had burned every criminating paper; and promised to adopt the version suggested by Biron, if questioned concerning his communications with the duke of Savoy, to whit—"that they tended only to facilitate the mar-

riage of the marshal with a daughter of Savoy—an alliance relinquished when it was found likely to be displeasing to his majesty."[1] The greatest secrecy was observed relative to the visit of M. Lafin: the day following his arrival at Fontainebleau he had an interview with the king, and made such important disclosures, and accused so many high personages, that Henry remitted further investigations to his minister, whom he summoned from his house at Moret, a village not very distant from the palace. When Rosny arrived Henry was on horseback, riding down the principal avenue of the palace, which then, as now, opens into the forest. "Important revelations, mon ami!" exclaimed Henry, embracing his favoured minister. "Lafin confesses all; many are implicated; but I have discovered that he is a great liar. Guess whom he accuses?" "Sire! no; never can I attribute treason to any of your servants without proof!" Henry laughed. "Well," said his majesty, "I hear that one M. de Rosny is a conspirator![2]—of course I believe not one word; but I have commanded Bellièvre and Villeroy to lay before you these said revelations; also I have directed this Lafin to meet you privately on the road to Moret, and to confess all." Rosny accordingly conferred with Lafin; and, as he avows, after such conference retained no doubt of Biron's guilt, allowing large latitude for exaggeration to a man in Lafin's position, whose confession was to be accepted as the ransom of

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 12. De Thou, liv. 128. Hist. de la Vie, Conspiration, Prison, Jugement, Testament et mort du maréchal de Biron—Imprimée à Paris en 1605.

[2] "Je ne pouvais comprendre comment mon nom se trouvait et avait même été nommé dans cette mechante cabale," writes M. de Rosny, in dismay.

his life. The following day all the letters, mandatês, and instructions intrusted by the marshal de Biron to Lafin for transmission to M. de Savoye and others, and of which Lafin had retained à copy, and in some instances the original document, were submitted to Villeroy, Bellièvre, and Rosny; and also a draft of the treaty of Como. By the advice of this junta, the king's journey was persisted in, the better to elucidate the present phase of the intrigue. Meantime, M. de Biron was to be summoned to meet the king on his return at Fontainebleau. No demonstration was made of any especial discoveries; and Lafin again wrote to the marshal to assure him that he had disclosed nothing; and as he had burned all documents connected with his missions to Como and to Milan, could deposit no written evidence in the hands of his majesty damaging to the loyalty of M. le Maréchal.[1] The report of the baron de Luz, Biron's present coadjutor, who happened to be on duty at court, was likewise reassuring. The latter stated his belief that the king could accuse the marshal of no positive delinquency; that the visit of Lafin had tended rather to allay the royal anxieties; for that the king owned to him, "that since his conference with M. de Lafin his mind was much more composed."[2] The baron, moreover, complacently wrote, that he was himself totally unsuspected of collusion in exciting the discontents in the south; or of having aided Biron in his dealings with Spain.

[1] Hist. de la Vie, etc. du maréchal de Biron. De Thou, liv. 128. Cayet—Chron. Septennaire.

[2] "Le roy me dit qu'il était trés aise d'avoir parlé à Lafin, et recognaissois maintenant que ce qu'on luy avoit dit du maréchal de Biron, n'étoit que de faux bruits," relates another narrator.

On the 22nd of April the court journeyed to Orléans. Precautions were previously taken to suppress risings in Burgundy, in case Biron took alarm and attempted to fortify himself in Dijon. Levies of men were made in the adjacent provinces, under pretext of strengthening the garrisons in Aix and other Provençal cities; and the marshal de Laverdin received private orders authorizing him to enter Burgundy in force, in case demonstrations of any kind were made hostile to the government. The confirmation thus received of the perfidy of his once favourite Biron overwhelmed the king with dejection.[1] It does not appear that Henry caused the depositions of Lafin to be taken, and military measures provided, with the intent of inflicting judicial reprisals on Biron. There is every reason to believe that the king was inspired at this period with clement intentions: that he wished to obviate the effects of Biron's disloyalty, and to reclaim the latter, without the scandal of an arraignment. Nevertheless, previous to a conference with his unfaithful subject, the king desired to ascertain every incident connected with Biron's crime, that he might not, as at Lyons, be deceived by partial and garbled admissions of guilt. The same merciful forbearance the king wished to exhibit towards the other personages accused. Henry, however, declared at this period that if the Marshal de Biron, and other persons implicated, rejected his clemency, which he was willing privately to demonstrate, the safety of his realm would not permit him ultimately to arrest the execution of the judicial awards ensuing from a public arraignment. To prove his full con-

[1] "Le roy était triste et pensif, et ne tenoit nul conseil ni affaires aucunes de justice, sinon à Blois."—Cayet—Chron. Sept.

fidence in Rosny, and to efface the slur cast by the random accusation of Lafin, the king created him governor of the Bastille,[1] and caused the letters patent to be countersigned and presented by Villeroy —the minister whose influence alone was supposed to rival that of Rosny.

On the 28th of April the court arrived at Blois, where the dukes de Bouillon, Epernon, and de la Trimouille, gave his majesty rendezvous. The place of meeting was ominous; the château, with its sanguinary memorials, was not a spot in which subjects conscious of secret disloyalty would choose again to meet the sovereign of France. M. d'Epernon, however, who was not in reality concerned in the intrigues afloat, took sensible and efficient measures for his vindication. He asked audience of the king; admitted that his antecedent career might justly cause him to be suspected; but protested that he knew nothing of the league, or designs of the supposed malcontents—in proof of which he offered to remain in attendance about the person of the king for six months; or if that period sufficed not to dissipate suspicion, he was ready to obey any mandate issued.[2] The duke also interceded for Biron, and begged the royal clemency for any aberrations of the latter from duty—excusing this interference on the plea that "M. de Biron had consulted him on the avowals made to the king when at Lyons." Epernon repeated the same statements to

[1] Mém. de Sully, liv. 12ème. "Ne voyant, disait le roy, que moi qui le pût bien servir, s'il luy arrivait d'avoir des oiseaux en cage!"

[2] Ibid. Girard—Hist. de la Vie du duc d'Epernon année 1602. Perefixe—Vie de Henri le Grand, année 1602. Also MS. Bibl. Imp.—Béth., vol. 9129, contains all the papers and documents connected with the conspiracy of Biron.

Rosny; which were deemed, both by the king and his minister, satisfactory. The case of the duke de Bouillon, however, excited grave misgiving—he was admitted to audience after M. d'Epernon. The king loved to recur, when with the duke, to the early days of their intimacy, when the valiant Turenne—as Henry still delighted to term Bouillon—was his chief friend and counsellor at Nérac, during the stormy days of his persecution by the late queen-mother and her sons. In this conciliatory spirit Henry opened his conference with the duke: his majesty—avoiding allusions to the foreign intelligences of Biron, in which he was then persuaded that Bouillon had not participated—spoke of the ill offices rendered to his government; and reproached the duke for the league he maintained with the Huguenots, whose disaffection he sought to encourage by instilling hopes of alliance with the Dutch Republic and with queen Elizabeth; —"practices which you have continued ever since our reconciliation with the Holy See for the weal of our realm; and despite the magnitude of our concessions in our edict of Nantes. It seems clear to us, therefore, Monsieur, that you seek your own aggrandizement, without regard to your allegiance and the rights of this crown!" To this expostulation the duke de Bouillon made intemperate reply. He assailed the king on all points: he protested his loyal intentions, and commented on the evil returns he had ever experienced. He reproached the king for believing the foolish reports of tale-bearers; and declared that the story of the alleged conspiracy was trumped up by certain of his majesty's ministers to promote their own views. He quoted Scripture to show that evil report assailed even the most immaculate—for instance, he said that the rumour was

prevalent that his majesty intended to deprive him of Sedan and of the heritage of his deceased wife. As for the Protestants of the realm, their condition was miserable—that the king considered them as the helots of his kingdom; and that it was more bitter to them to be persecuted by his majesty, who once belonged to their communion, than by the deceased kings of detestable memory." Henry displayed considerable temper during this interview: he permitted Bouillon to rail till his expletives were exhausted. His majesty then explained his intended policy, and requested the duke to concede the same testimony of the purity of his motives as had been spontaneously offered by M. d'Epernon—to remain six months at court. Bouillon hesitated; he then thanked his majesty for the benign sentiments he had expressed; but requested permission, before taking up his abode at court, to make the round of his castles, in order to put his pecuniary affairs into the hands of competent stewards.[1] The king understood the evasion—and when Bouillon took leave his majesty held a council, at which were present MM. de Soissons, Rosny, Bellièvre Villeroy, and the under-secretary of state, M. de Maisse. One M. d'Escures,[2] who had been sent to Dijon to desire the presence of Biron, was introduced and examined. The relation of the envoy, who was on friendly terms with the marshal, and therefore made the best report in his power, more than confirmed the sinister rumours prevalent. The personages in council, Rosny excepted, then advised the king to stay further mischief by arresting all the confederates—namely, the dukes de

[1] Sully, liv. 12ème. Marsolier—Vie du duc de Bouillon. Siri—Mém. Recondites, vol. 1.

[2] Pierre Fourgueuse.

Bouillon, Epernon, Trimouille, and Biron, and the count d'Auvergne. The question was debated during several hours: the consideration suggested by Rosny finally prevailed, that such personages could not be committed to the Bastille on suspicion—that if arrested their arraignment must of necessity follow, and, what was most to be deprecated, punishment ensue; more perhaps to obviate the consequences of future vengeance than in chastisement of actual guilt.[1] As for M. d'Epernon, the king said that he possessed no proofs of his disloyalty.

During the sojourn of the court at Blois affairs remained in the same perplexed condition, aggravated, however, by domestic broils between the royal pair. The queen's violent temper and jealousy broke forth with fresh acrimony on the old subject of madame la Marquise, whose immediate removal from the Louvre she now demanded. The king, thereupon, assented; but installed his mistress in the magnificent abode called l'Hôtel de la Reine, occupied by Madame before her marriage.[2] Henriette, moreover, re-commenced her irritating inuendoes; and it was told the queen that she had publicly said, "The little prince, son of the Florentine, bears no

[1] Sully, le Père Daniël, Mathieu, Cayet, Mezerai—Dupleix Vie du duc de Biron—Le Laboureur sur Castelnau. De Thou, Siri—Mém. Recondites, and many MS. authorities, for these details.

[2] Also called Hôtel de Soissons. The king, moreover, presented his mistress with the sum of 6000 livres, for the expenses consequent on her change of abode. The king allowed madame de Verneuil the sum of 1500 livres every three months. Comptes des Depenses de Henri IV.—Archives du Royaume de France; also Archives Curieuses, t. 15, 1er. series. His majesty often gave the marchioness gifts of money in addition to her allowance

resemblance to his royal father, but has the dark complexion and harsh features of the Medici!"[1] Altercations also happened between Henry and Marie relative to the duke de Bracciano—disputes which owed their origin to madame la Marquise, who audaciously asserted that her majesty's preference had ever been given, and still rested with, Don Virginio Orsini. Henry, consequently, refused to delay his journey from Paris, to enable the queen to see her cousin, who arrived in Paris during the month of March from England; but said that the duke might follow the court to Fontainebleau. The day for the departure of the king for Blois, however, was unfortunately fixed before Don Virginio gave notice of his visit. Henry again declined to wait for the duke; or to suffer queen Marie to remain to receive him. These various causes occasioned such differences between the royal pair when at Blois, that the queen announced her determination not to proceed to Poitiers with her royal husband, but to return forthwith to Fontainebleau. Her majesty made this communication early one morning before the king rose, seasoning it with so many tart allusions to madame la Marquise, that Henry retorted by declaring that her desire to return to Fontainebleau arose from longing to see M. de Bracciano.[2] Marie, hearing this taunt, rose in bed, and struck the king in the face: this indignity Henry resented by seizing his consort by the wrists, holding her prisoner for some minutes. The noise of this altercation so alarmed madame Concini, that she despatched Ar-

[1] Istoria del Granducato, lib. 5.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. Béth., 8944, fol. 39—"Les Principaux sujets de la mauvaise intelligence d'entre le Roy Henri IV. et la royne Marie de Medici."

magnac, the king's *valet de chambre*, to fetch M. de Rosny. When the latter arrived the king had quitted his consort's chamber, and was revolving the scene in great wrath in his own apartment. Rosny makes mysterious allusion to the cause of the royal dissension: and states that he gave his word of honour to the king and queen to conceal the true origin of the *fracas*.[1] He, however, performed the part of mediator, going from chamber to chamber, and entreating their majesties to be reconciled. For some days, however, his efforts were fruitless—the queen sullenly persisting in asserting her resolve to return to Fontainebleau. This continued obduracy incensed the king, who one morning sent for M. de Rosny to join him in his promenade on the new terrace he was constructing at Blois. "There was a sentinel placed at each end of this terrace, and his majesty, in the sight of the court, there walked with me for two hours." Rosny's *retenue* again prevents the full explanation of the subject of debate. He tells sufficient, however, to show that Henry proposed to confine the queen to one of his castles for a season; and, meantime, to exile the importunate cohort—the personages of her majesty's bedchamber clique. The mother of the dauphin was, however, a sacred personage in the eyes of the minister, who, moreover, admits the intense provocation to which the queen had been subjected. "He counselled patience, moderation, and that the king should not seek to aggravate matters by a too curious scrutiny into the past." A manuscript relation[2] "of the causes

[1] Other sources, however, reveal that this *fracas*, and many others, arose from the king's jealousy of M. de Bracciano.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. MS. de Béth., 8944, fol. 39; also Fontanieu, 446, Bibl. Imp. MS.

of dissension between their majesties" records that M. de Rosny replied thus to the royal proposal to exile the queen: "Sire, your proposal might be feasible if the queen had no children; but since God has given her a son, beware of committing such folly. Dissimulate your sentiments; and hope that you who have overcome difficulties so excessive may in time be able to reduce and tame the spirit of an irritable and contentious woman." The same authority states that Rosny and his wife made such urgent prayer and remonstrance to the queen, that she at length consented to seek her royal husband, and seal their reconciliation by continuing her journey to Poitiers.[1]

The court, therefore, continued its progress, making short sojourn at Plessis les Tours, from whence, on the 14th of May, the king addressed positive and official summons to Biron, to repair to Fontainebleau, by the president Jeannin and M. d'Escures.[2] These envoys were authorized to state to the marshal the cause of the royal mandate—to whit, his rumoured correspondence with the enemies of the realm. Neither of the envoys knew the object or result of Lafin's visit to Fontainebleau; nor that he had deposited papers with the chancellor. Henry, in his missive, expressed his hope that Biron would be able to clear himself from calumny: the marshal might, nevertheless, repair to court in confident assurance of his goodwill and affection.

[1] Sully, liv. 13ème. Sully says that the following names were heard by the courtiers frequently repeated by the king and queen during their furious contention—the names of the duchesses de Florence and Mantua, Don Juan de Medici, Virginio Orsini, Concini, Eleonore Galigai, Gondy, madame de Verneuil, and that of Catherine Selvaggio, a tirewoman.

[2] Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

The presence of the king, meanwhile, produced the best effects on the provinces;[1] no signs of disaffection were manifested; the enthusiasm was great, and his majesty was decorously petitioned by the towns of Poitiers and La Rochelle to annul the tax *du sou pour livre*; an *octroi*, the levy of which created dissension, and rendered his majesty's tax-gatherers odious to the people. Henry graciously complied, and repealed the famous Pancarte, by the counsel and assent of Rosny: the edict stated that such concession was made in deference to the obedient loyalty of his subjects.[2]

The mandate of the king, meanwhile, greatly disquieted the duke de Biron. To decline to obey would be openly to proclaim disloyal intents; while the probable consequence of such refusal might be the occupation of Burgundy, and his arrest. The duke, moreover, placed surprising confidence in the word of M. de Lafin, although aware of the offence he had given the latter; and also that the secretary Renazé, the original cause of their dissension, remained a close prisoner in the fortress of Quiers. Biron's confidence was likewise confirmed by the duke d'Epernon; and even by the report of the duke de Bouillon. Both these noblemen stated their

[1] "Le presence du roi fut d'une si grande efficace qu'il ne trouva nulle part d'opposition à ses volontés."—Sully, liv. 13.

[2] Pasquier relates that when at Poitiers Henry suddenly accosted one of his great nobles, probably the duke de la Trimouille, and asked him whether he promoted the popular agitation. "Oui," replied the duke, "parce que vous en donnez sujet, vous, et celuy qui fait tout sous votre nom" (Rosny); "mais si vous abolissez la Pancarte tous les princes et les seigneurs sont prêts à rendre toute obeissance et tout service à votre majesté." A quoi le roy repliqua: "S'il ne tient que cela, vous serez tous contents!"—Lettres de Pasquier, liv. 7.

belief that no treasonable charges had been preferred against the marshal, or entertained by the privy-council—that the royal suspicions were general, and not founded on precise depositions. M. de Luz, who by a singular coincidence was present at Fontainebleau during the sojourn there of Lafin, expressed a similar opinion; nevertheless he prudently recommended Biron not to visit the court. Another adherent, a M. le Plessis, however, declared that Lafin was a traitor, and had revealed all, and more than all the truth; and that the duke's only chance of avoiding arrest was to retreat to the Spaniards in Franche-Comté. Biron, nevertheless, relying on the favour of the king, and on the advices received, determined to repair to Fontainebleau; and settled to limit his avowals to the admissions made at Lyons, and stoutly to deny all knowledge of the conference of Como, and of subsequent intestine conspiracies. In short, the duke had only the alternatives of flight or submission; for the fortresses of his government were in no condition to make a stand, being partially dismantled by the wary Rosny; who in his capacity of grand-master of artillery had ordered the guns of Dijon, Beaune, Maçon, and Auxerre to be dismounted, in order to be replaced by new cannon, the arrival of which he had taken care to delay. Biron, therefore, quitted Dijon about the first week in June, 1602, and slowly travelled to Fontainebleau. From the moment that the marshal quitted the capital city of his government, his option of repairing to court ceased. A detachment of 100 soldiers from the *corps d'armée* of Laverdin followed to intercept his retreat back to Dijon; while the officer in command had sealed orders to prevent the

flight of M. de Biron,[1] should the latter attempt to quit the realm. Biron, however, confidently pursued his journey; and sent forwards M. d'Escures to announce his speedy presence to the king. The duke d'Epernon, meantime, having great experience in the premonitory symptoms of a *coup d'état*, beheld with concern the arrival of the marshal, and his confident deportment; and being sincerely Biron's friend, the duke generously sent one of his gentlemen, under pretext of saluting the marshal, to warn him to act frankly; and if he had erred, as was surmised, to throw himself on the clemency of the king.[2] This proceeding very nearly occasioned the arrest of Epernon; luckily, however, it occurred to the duke to report to his majesty the step he had taken, and its motive—an explanation which at once satisfied the king.

In the vicinity of the palace, Biron met M. Lafin. The traitor lifted his hat to his late employer, and passed by, with the words—"*Mon maître, courage, et bon bec!*"[3] It was six o'clock of the morning of Wednesday, June 12th, when the duc de Biron entered the Cour du Donjon of Fontainebleau. The king, always an early riser, was walking in what was then called *le grand jardin*, accompanied by Epernon, Bellegarde, and two other courtiers. The dis-

[1] "Des lors que le duc fut parti de Dijon, il n'etois plus en sa puissance de retourner, car de dîner à souper 100 chevaux le suivoient de traille en traille, sur ses pas, tellement qu'il à experimenté, qu'il ne s'en faut point prendre à son maitre qui ne s'en veut repentir."—Vie du duc de Biron.

[2] Girard—Vie du duc d'Epernon, année 1602. The name of the gentleman was M. Duplessis Boissonière, to whom is attributed the subsequent resolve taken by Epernon to intimate to his majesty the step which he had taken.

[3] Sully, liv. 13ème.

course turned on the expected arrival of Biron, and when that event would happen. Before Henry could answer, he perceived M. de Biron advancing across the *parterre*. Biron made three obeisances, then kneeling, he kissed the royal hand. Henry seemed affected; and passing his arm round the neck of the marshal, he embraced him, saying, "You have done well, mon ami, to confide in me; otherwise, I was about to seek you myself."[1] Henry, then dismissing his attendants, took the marshal's hand, and leaning familiarly on Biron's shoulder, as was his wont, passed into the grand avenue of the château. The king then said that he had summoned Biron in consequence of reports current respecting his disloyal pact with Savoy; and especially concerning the recent attempted *soulèvement* in the south-western provinces of the realm. "Believe me, mon ami, that unless you now avow to me the truth respecting these said affairs, you will deeply repent!" said his majesty. Biron haughtily replied, "that he had never failed in his duty—that his majesty's doubts were injurious, especially after the promise of pardon which he had voluntarily given at Lyons: in short, sire, I am not here to justify myself; but to learn from you who are my accusers —such is the sole object of my journey!"[2] Henry then asked for explanations on several points of the marshal's alleged confession when at Lyons; and on the nature of his correspondence with M. Lafin. Biron answered his majesty in tones of suppressed irritation; and stated, "that his fault, as he had

[1] De Thou—Vie du maréchal de Biron.

[2] "Biron repondit hardiment, qu'il n'etoit pas venu à la cour pour se justifier, puis qu'il etoit innocent; mais pour savoir les noms de ses accusateurs."—De Thou, liv. 128.

confessed, was, having coveted the matrimonial alliance offered by M. de Savoye; and that he had made the sacrifice to content his master; and since had blamelessly discharged his duty." The king made no reply; but returned to the palace, and changed the conversation to an enumeration of the architectural improvements which he there meditated.[1] Biron dined with the duke d'Epernon, and remained in the apartments of the latter until the hour when the noblemen in waiting usually sought the presence of his majesty. Henry was walking in one of the galleries, which was in process of being decorated. His majesty happened to be examining a fresco on the wall representing the battle of Ivry, over which had been placed by the queen's hand a small statuette of himself, armed cap-à-pie. "Ah! M. de Biron!" exclaimed the king, "what would his catholic majesty say if he met me in such guise?" "Sire!" responded the imprudent Biron, "his majesty would not fear you!" Observing the sensation produced by this response, the marshal coloured—then hastily added, "that is to say, sire, as represented by the statue—personally, the encounter would be different!" The king smiled, and walked away, saying—"Well explained, M. le Maréchal!" and entered his private apartments.[2] There Bel-

[1] Rosny was at Moret when Biron arrived; the king sent an express to inform his minister of the duke's arrival. "Mon amy, notre homme est venu; il affecte beaucoup de retenue et de sagesse: venez en diligence, afin que nous avisions à ce que nous avons à faire. Adieu, je vous aime bien!"—Sully, liv. 13ème.

[2] Hist. de la Vie, etc. du maréchal de Biron—imprimée à Paris, 1605. "Et lors le roy le regarda d'une œillade rigoureuse, dont il s'aperçut, et soudain r'habillant son dire il ajoute etc."—Perefixe—Hist. de Henri le Grand.

lièvre and Rosny held short conference with the king; Henry afterwards desired that the duc de Biron should be sent to him. Again the king addressed Biron, and conjured him, if he were privy to practices against the welfare of the realm, to avow them; assuring him of his regard and desire to pardon such enterprises. Henry alluded to their early intimacy; and instanced, in proof of his esteem, the elevation of Biron from a poor cadet of Gontaut, to the eminent dignities which he now enjoyed. The duke being under the fatal delusion that the royal solicitations were but a trap to obtain that information which the examination of Lafin had not afforded, replied: "That the king was mistaken; that he had nothing fresh to confess; but demanded to be confronted with his accusers!" The hour at which Henry usually visited his tennis-court having struck, the king, followed by Biron, then repaired thither, and played a game with the count de Soissons against Epernon and Biron. The latter seemed depressed, and played badly. "Ah, Monseigneur," exclaimed Epernon, "your game is masterly, but you should consider before you aim!"—a *mot* which caused the king to look steadily at Epernon.[1] The count de Soissons afterwards invited the marshal to sup with him. At the conclusion of the repast the count, by desire of the king—as in his capacity of prince of the blood, and grand-master of the household, he could speak without reserve to Biron—drew the latter aside, and said, "That unquestionably the king lately had had cause gravely to suspect his fidelity: moreover, that his majesty was perfectly well informed of his proceedings; he, therefore, as the friend of M. de Biron, besought him to own his

[1] Hist. de la Vie du maréchal de Biron.

fault, lest his stubborn denials of what was well ascertained might so irritate the king, that reconciliation would thenceforth be impossible. "Remember, Monseigneur, the word of the wise man of Scripture, 'the wrath of a king is as the herald of death!'"[1] After all these ominous and varied intimations it seems incredible that the marshal could persist in his contumacious denials; nevertheless, such is the fact. To avail himself of the result of the marshal's night reflections, Henry invited Biron to share his early walk on the following morning, adding many proofs of condescending interest. The marshal, however, entertained the king on indifferent subjects, in his usual inflated style; but admitted no failing of duty. "The lookers-on watched his majesty with M. le Maréchal walking in the vicinity of the aviary. M. de Biron walked bareheaded, and frequently smote his breast with his hands, in deprecation of and menace towards his accusers. 'Sire,' said Biron, 'you will never have other answer from me than that which I have given. I protest against your suspicion of my fidelity, the which ought to be placed beyond question by the services which I have rendered to your crown.'" So inflexible a spirit it was evident that no remonstrance or persuasion could subdue.

After dinner on Thursday, June 14th, the king summoned his ministers. Queen Marie was present at the council, entering with her husband, the most loving cordiality now subsisting between the royal pair. Marie demonstrated great interest in the serious affairs which occupied the king, and surprised him by her aptitude and decision. The arrest

[1] De Thou, liv. 128. Girard—Vie du duc d'Epernon, année 1602, pp. 201, et seq.

of the count d'Auvergne was first discussed and resolved upon — although little had been averred against this prince, beyond the fact that, in concert with Bouillon and Biron, he had signed the compact which bound these noblemen to mutual support in their designs. Auvergne, however, was supposed to be weak and selfish enough to extricate himself from the scrape by making plenary confession of any facts confided to him. The queen made no effort to intercede for the brother of her rival, madame la Marquise; but spoke in extenuation of the crimes of Biron; partly, therefore, at her majesty's request, M. de Rosny was deputed again to assault the marshal, and, if possible, win from him confession. "If M. de Biron confides in you," said the king, "assure him that he may fearlessly seek my presence and avow all. If he disguises nothing, I give you my royal word that I will with all my heart accord him a free pardon!" Rosny, therefore, went in search of the marshal, whom he found sitting gloomily against the king's bed, speaking at intervals to an officer of the chamber, M. la Curée.[1] Rosny had recently arrived at the palace from Moret; and had not that morning seen M. de Biron. The latter rose and replied to Rosny's greeting with distant courtesy; for the marshal resented the dismantling of his fortresses, perceiving now the intent of Henry's wily minister. Rosny has been accused of hardening Henry's heart to measures of the last rigour against Biron; whom, it is asserted, he disliked, for the inso-

[1] "Le roi revint encore une dernière fois au parti que sa douceur naturelle lui avait toujours dicté, de chercher à faire rentrer le maréchal de Biron en lui même."—Sully, liv. 13ème. The king prohibited M. de Rosny from revealing the admissions of Lafin.

lencies which in early days he had received from the marshal and his father, neither of whom certainly can be commended for their amenity of diction. The charge, however, seems unfounded: Biron's fate was in his own hands for two whole days—and his royal master added supplications to his endeavour to extort confession. Biron, in fact, apprehended by confession to incur the same fate which afterwards befell him owing to his obduracy. Rosny commenced his operations by asking the marshal what kind of reception he had met with from the king? "Oh," responded Biron, indifferently, "I have reverently saluted his majesty. I replied to the questions put to me by the king, but I had nothing especially to communicate." "Ah, Monsieur! this is not the way to treat the king. He suspects you, and not without good cause. Open your heart to the king, or to me if you prefer it, and I give you my word, you and his majesty may be reconciled before nightfall!" "I have nothing to confess to the king nor to you. Let his majesty accuse me if he has a grievance, and I will answer," replied Biron. "Monsieur," said Rosny, "let your conscience become your judge. I warn you, act as if you positively knew that we are well informed of all that you ever thought or devised in your most secret counsels. If I err and commit any fault or peccadillo, I repair to his majesty, make confession, and am absolved!" "That is all very well for you," said Biron, scornfully; "but I have neither fault nor peccadillo to confess to his majesty. My conscience is clear since the avowals I made at Lyons!"[1] Biron then rose, and retired to his apartments.

The unfaltering denials of Biron, that he had not

[1] Sully Mém., liv. 13ème. Cayet, Perefixe, De Thou.

betrayed his master from the period of the campaign in Savoy, afterwards occasioned much diversity of opinion. The marshal confided in, and constantly quoted the pardon hastily given by the king in the Franciscan cloister at Lyons. But Biron never there confessed the magnitude of his treasonable communications; nor that he, the general commanding in chief, had betrayed to the enemy the force and disposition of the regiments in the service of his master, and had indicated a plan of campaign likely to rout the armies of France: neither that he had encouraged the resistance of M. de Savoye, and the intrigues of Fuentes, by disclosing the intestine and pecuniary grievances of his countrymen. The original of this treacherous communication lay on the council-table in the handwriting of the marshal. It was true that evidence concerning the treaty of Como rested on the oath of Lafin, who produced only a draft, in his own handwriting, of the instructions confided to him by the marshal. Indirect evidence, however, abounded in the despatches of Du Fresne Canaye, and of Cardinal d'Ossat, the envoys at Venice and Rome, that the accusation was true: besides, the voluntary admissions of the duke had been aggravated enough to render the charge of treason of more malignant description probable. A copy of the formula of the league concluded between Bouillon, Auvergne, and Biron, was also in possession of the council. The ministers of the king, therefore, considered the guilt of the marshal established: they represented to his majesty the danger of suffering Biron to depart angered by the solicitations and half threats addressed to him, unless such feelings were neutralized by voluntary confession. On the other hand, privately to convict Biron by the proofs in

his majesty's possession, and to avow the searching inquisition instituted, and then, despite his previous obdurate denials, to grant him pardon, would be a course fraught with peril to the monarchy—as Biron would never pardon or forget this humiliation. The conclusion which ensued, therefore, was, that the arrest of MM. de Biron and d'Auvergne was expedient and imperative. Henry agreed; reserving to himself the power of making one more effort to subdue the contumacy of Biron. "This failing, I deem myself bound as a father and a king to deliver my realm from such specious agitators; and thereby to afford salutary example to other traitors in intent, though perhaps not yet in act!" MM. de Vitry and de Praslin, captains of the guard, were then summoned, and received directions from the king in council to hold themselves and their regiments in readiness to execute any command which might be issued for the sudden arrest of certain personages. The mode of this arrest was next debated. It was proposed that after Biron and Auvergne retired for the night their lodging should be surrounded with troops, and their capture effected. Rosny, however, counselled that the arrest should be accomplished on taking leave of his majesty at night; for he deemed the risk great to suffer personages so ominously forewarned to leave the palace at dark hour. The duke de Biron, meantime, retired to his quarters in very pensive mood, and at last aroused to the peril of his position. Relying on the affirmations of Lafin that he had betrayed nothing; and having, as he believed, witnessed the burning of all documents confided to that agent, the duke resolved to make a bold attempt at flight. Accordingly, he gave secret orders for his horses to be saddled

and led at midnight to a certain spot in the forest, being determined, after quitting the circle, to fly from Fontainebleau. A similar panic seized M. d'Auvergne—or he managed to hold communication with Biron, and arranged to share his flight—a fact probable, though never ascertained. The duke then went to sup with M. de Montigny, governor of Paris. The same insane spirit of bravado possessed Biron to the last. During the repast he lauded the king of Spain before a numerous circle of courtiers. "His Catholic majesty," said the duke, "kindles in the hearts of his warriors fervent love and zeal: he recompenses not only their valiant deeds, but extends his favour to the widows and children of his slain!" "True, M. le Maréchal; but his Catholic majesty, as you know, never pardons. It is a tradition of his court that a king of Spain dispenses inflexible justice, and spares not even his own son!" replied de Montigny.[1] The circle presently dispersed, to meet again in the saloon of the queen. As Biron ascended the grand staircase a page presented a note, sent, as he stated, from the countess de Roussy, the duke's sister. Surprised at receiving the missive, as the countess was in Paris, the duke anxiously asked after the health of his sister. The messenger made a sign and vanished. Biron opened the note: it contained a warning from some unknown friend, that in less than three hours his arrest would be effected, unless he could manage to escape, or to satisfy his majesty.[2]

[1] Vie du maréchal de Biron. Sully, liv. 13ème. Dupleix—Hist. de France. Mezerai.

[2] Many were the conjectures as to who was the writer of the mysterious letter. Some assert that it was another *ruse* employed by the king to terrify the marshal into confession, whom he longed to save. Others hold that the intimation came from

He showed the note to one of his gentlemen, named Varennes, laughed, and passed on indifferently. The duke, after making obeisance to the queen, was invited by Henry to join in the game of Primero, which he was playing with her majesty. While so engaged, the Count d'Auvergne approached, and giving Biron a poke in the side, whispered, "*Maréchal il ne fait pas bon ici pour nous!*" Biron continued his play with unchanged countenance; when the king, as the clock struck eleven, gave his cards to M. de Montbazon, and desiring him to continue the game with the queen, took Biron by the arm and led him apart. Henry then requested explanation on certain *menées*, "concerning which, however, he had nothing new to learn."[1] "Maréchal, mon ami, confess to me your errors with your own lips, and on the word of a king, whatever they may be, I will pardon, screen you with my royal favour, and for ever forget your misdeeds! If you drive me, however, against my will, and the welfare of my crown, to prove your crime publicly, I will not, I swear, interfere with the award of justice; but I will leave you to abide by the chastisement you may have merited!" Complete innocence, or the most consummate presumption, could alone dictate the reply made by Biron to this appeal of his indulgent master. "Sire," said he, "I came, as I before told you, not to vindicate myself, but to know who my accusers are. I supplicate your majesty to give up the names of these slan-

the duke d'Epernon, or from the queen, who thought that she beheld a future devoted servant in M. de Biron. Madame de Roussy, who was in Paris waiting her accouchement, was the wife of a cadet of La Rochefoucault.

[1] Vie du maréchal de Biron—imprimée à Paris. Archives Curieuses, t. 14.

derers, that I may do myself justice, or demand such from your majesty!" "Well, Maréchal, I perceive that you intend to divulge nothing. Remember, therefore, that I cannot save you. I will now seek information from M. d'Auvergne!"[1] With these words Henry retired to his cabinet, and closed the door. His majesty then, being still profoundly affected, summoned Vitry and Praslin, and commanded the former to arrest the marshal de Biron, and the latter to seize the person of M. d'Auvergne, when these personages quitted the saloon of her majesty queen Marie. In the space of ten minutes the courts, the staircase, and the corridors of the palace were filled with soldiers. Henry then re-entered the saloon and dismissed the circle. The queen rose, looking pale and agitated. Henry took the hand of his consort, and bowing to the assemblage, pointedly said to the duke de Biron—"Adieu, *Baron* de Biron!—remember the words I have spoken!"[2] A sign, a word from Biron, while he remained in the presence, might have averted the catastrophe. The duke, however, passed his hand over his brow, and slowly retired. As he crossed the portal, Vitry placed his left hand on the shoulder of the marshal, and with the right seized his sword. "Monsieur! the king commands your arrest! Yield your sword!" The duke started and turned pale—he next made a menacing gesture, upon which several gentlemen, his

[1] "Bien, maréchal: je vois bien que je n'apprendray rien de vous: je m'en vais voir le comte d'Auvergne pour essayer d'en apprendre davantage," is the version of the chronicle of the "Vie du maréchal de Biron."

[2] Ibid.—De Thou, Dupleix, Mathieu, Le Laboureur—Additions aux Memoires de Castelnau. Queen Marie profited by the lesson, and herself made as skilful an arrest, as will be related in a future volume on the Regency of Marie de Medici.

retainers, drew their swords. These persons were speedily disarmed by the soldiers, and conveyed away as prisoners. "You jest, M. de Vitry!" at length exclaimed Biron, sharply. "Monsieur, resistance is vain!—in the name of the king I arrest you!" The marshal then besought permission to speak with his majesty, and essayed to re-enter the saloon he had quitted. "No, Monsieur!—the king has retired! Your sword!" "What! you take my sword—the sword which has rendered the king such good service!" Vitry thereupon beckoned to one of his officers to advance and ungird the sword. The duke then, after gazing hopelessly round the chamber, which was filled with soldiers, surrendered his sword, and was led away in the custody of Vitry.[1]

The Count d'Auvergne, meantime, escaped from the royal presence whilst the king was speaking with Biron. Restless and apprehensive, he resolved upon flight before the storm exploded. To his intense disappointment he found that access from the Cour Ovale and the Cour du Donjon was barred by soldiers with halberds. The count, therefore, entered his own apartments, waiting his opportunity to escape. The courts, however, presently swarmed with soldiers. M. d'Auvergne, who thereby saw his worst apprehensions confirmed, tried again furtively to pass the gate of the palace. M. de Praslin, however, was watching for his prisoner. Knowing that resistance was useless, the count gave his sword, ironically saying—"Take it! it is not illustrious as a weapon, and has only been wetted with the blood of boars: 'tis a pity you did not apprize me of this

[1] De Thou, liv. 128. Vie du maréchal de Biron. He was arrested in la Chambre St. Louis. Bassompierre; Cayet—Chron. Septennaire.

fracas, or two hours ago I should have been in bed and asleep!" The prisoner was then conveyed to the chamber he had occupied, under a strong guard, in arms throughout the night.[1] The capture effected, Henry summoned M. de Rosny, who had retired to his pavilion[2] pending the arrest. It is somewhat singular that Henry, at the critical moment of Biron's arrest, had none of his three confidential servants present, though they were abiding in Fontainebleau. M. de Rosny relates that the king, on perceiving him, eagerly came forward with the exclamation—"Our men are caught: depart forthwith and prepare their lodgings in the Bastille! It is my intention to send them by water to Paris—they will land at your Arsenal. Afterwards, if you have leisure, go to the Hôtel de Ville, and to the parliament, and notify the measures I have been compelled to adopt!"

The following day early, M. d'Escures, who had been employed to persuade Biron to repair to court on the word of the king that no harm should ensue, asked audience to express his grief at having been selected as the agent of what appeared to him so disloyal a proceeding. "The king, however, explained to M. d'Escures, with tears, the overtures he had made, and how contumaciously M. de Biron rejected his clemency." By the same authority Henry is stated to have informed d'Escures that the intention of Biron was to revolutionize the realm;

[1] Ibid.—De Thou, liv. 128. MS. Bibl. Imp. vol. 9129.

[2] Sully relates that Biron's lodging was in the pavilion opposite to his own, so that he could see almost into the apartment of the marshal. "Je lisais et me promenais alternativement, sans cesser de faire attention de ce côté là, où je m'attendais à chaque moment de voir commencer une attaque, et de recevoir de nouveaux ordres du roy sur ce que j'avais à faire."—Livre 13ème.

and that he continued his *liaison* with the condé de Fuentes after the latter had said "that the king of Spain never would trust or cordially assist the French until the line of their kings was extinct; and that the first guarantee demanded by king Philip was the death of the king and of his dauphin."[1] The deportment of Biron after his arrest was violent;[2] he spent the night in traversing his chamber, raving against the ingratitude of the king, and vehemently asserting his innocence. At dawn he sent to petition for an interview with his majesty, which was refused. He then asked to see M. de Rosny and M. d'Epernon, and again despatched a request to be admitted to the royal presence. About dinner time he transmitted a warning to the king, to seize the castles of Dijon and Beaune; or that, on the news of his arrest, his lieutenant, M. de Luz, might surrender them to the Spanish governor of Franche-Comté. Henry had already taken his precautions, so that the intrigues of M. de Luz excited no distrust: nevertheless, this acknowledgment on the part of Biron was deemed fatal and imprudent, as it established the fact that the latter and his lieutenant held treasonable relations with Spain.

The king on this day, June 15th, wrote several important despatches with his own hand. His majesty also signed circular letters to the governors of towns and the parliaments of districts. To Du Fresnes, ambassador to the Seignory, Henry writes—"I have been compelled, to my very great regret, to

[1] Vie, etc. du maréchal de Biron. Paris, 1603.

[2] De Thou.—"Biron s'abandonne à sa petulence ordinaire et ne cessa de parler de ses services, et de l'ingratitude du roi." The chamber in which Biron was detained was la Chambre Ovale, in which the dauphin was born.

seize the persons of the duc de Biron and the count d'Auvergne, having discovered, by documents under their own hands, and not by uncertain rumours, that they have been guilty of conspiring against my person and realm, at the instigation of the duke of Savoye and the count de Fuentes. It is my intention to deliver these said prisoners to my parliament of Paris, that justice may be done in all sincere integrity. Would to God that they might prove themselves as innocent of the crime of which they are accused, as I can verify that they are guilty!—for I would have saved them willingly; and have felt only too glad to continue to them the honours and benefits which they received from me, rather than deprive myself of their valiant co-operation. I beg you to believe that if these said princes had humbled themselves, or that I could have devised any method to preserve my realm and person, I never would have resorted to this remedy!"[1] To M. de la Force, the faithful servant of the house of Albret, and Biron's brother-in-law, Henry likewise addressed a letter, in which he says that La Force will scarcely believe the facts of this conspiracy and arrest—"you knowing how much I loved and honoured this said Biron."[2] To Duplessis Mornay Henry sent details, a few days subsequently, of the conspiracy—"Of all men in my dominions the said duc de Biron owed me most, and was most bound to fidelity to my crown!" wrote the king. The charges against the count d'Auvergne, meanwhile, were so feebly substantiated, that wonder is excited that he was enveloped in the catastrophe of Biron.

[1] Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5. Orig.—Archives de Couhé Lusignan.

[2] Egerton MSS. B. Museum, fol. 110.

The count was young and thoughtless: moreover, he was the son of Charles IX., the half-brother of madame de Verneuil, and the son-in-law of Montmorency. Kindred, therefore, so powerful sufficed to invalidate an indictment not based on written testimony. M. d'Auvergne seems from the first to have resigned himself to his prison—while no public endeavours were made by his relatives to procure his pardon.

The prisoners, meantime, were placed in a covered boat, and sent by water to Paris, under strong guard, on Saturday June 16th. They landed at the Arsenal between seven and eight in the evening, and were received by the governor of the Bastille, M. de Rosny, and a battalion of soldiers.[1] Silence and secrecy prevailed—the prisoners were conveyed through the gardens and courts of the Arsenal to the Bastille. Sentinels were placed under the windows of their chamber; extra guards were mounted; and every precaution taken to prevent their escape. Biron continued his turbulent demeanour, and reviled the king in language which shocked the ears of Henry's loyal subjects. The warrant for the trial of the duke de Biron for high treason before the High Court of Parliament was issued on the 17th of June. A commission was also nominated, consisting of the first president, De Harlay, the president Blancmesnil, and the advocates Fleury and Thurin, to conduct the preliminary interrogatories.[2] M. d'Auvergne was exempted

[1] "Au moment que les prisonniers mettaient pied à terre à l'Arsenal, ma femme accouchait de celle de mes filles qui a porté le nom de mademoiselle de Sully, liv. 13ème.

[2] Bibl. Imp. MS. Béth., 8956. The warrant is addressed, "Henry par le grace de Dieu Roy de France et de Navarre à nos

from the ordeal of trial, until proof positive was obtained of his criminal connivance—an indulgence wrested from the king by the indignant outcries of madame la Marquise. Henry left Fontainebleau about the 16th of June, for a brief visit to St. Germain, to hold counsel on the trial. His majesty was received in Paris with enthusiasm; and the people showed their sympathy in the alleged peril which their monarch and his realm had escaped.

The marshal de Biron was interrogated for the first time on the 18th of June, in the council-chamber of the Bastille, according to the president De Thou—Rosny, however, states that the examination was made in a pavilion erected in the middle of the great walk in the gardens of the Arsenal. The commissioners were received with angry impatience by the duke: who, when the clerk of arraigns was about to read the royal commission, begged to be spared the trouble of hearing the document. "There are two modes of proceeding, Messieurs, against an accused person—the way of rigour, and the way of favour—the choice in my case remains with the king. My innocence gives me confidence; for if my conscience in any way pricked me, I should not now be in your power. I chose, however, to risk the chance of slander and imprisonment rather than compromise my reputation by flight." The first president allowed the duke to harangue at his leisure, without interrupting him. He then commenced the interrogatory. Biron boldly denied all, still being under the delusion that M. Lafin had been silent; and that no minutes of instructions

amez et féaux conseillers, les gens tenant nostre cour de Parlement de Paris: Salut," etc. A copy of this warrant is also amongst the MSS. of the King's Library.

existed. De Harlay then produced letters written by the marshal to the king, and requested Biron to state whether such were in his handwriting. When the marshal had identified these letters, the president produced the four sheets of instructions given by Biron to Lafin while investing the fortress of Bourg, and compared the manuscript with the handwriting of the letters. At the sight of the first sheet the marshal hesitatingly owned that he had written it — on the second being presented he changed colour, and declared that it was a forgery perpetrated by two servants, who could perfectly imitate his handwriting—the third sheet he acknowledged reluctantly. The president then drew the attention of the prisoner to the fact that the last words of the second page and the first sentence of the third corresponded; and therefore must have emanated from the same mind. After much prevarication, the duke at lenth boldly owned that he had written the whole, but only, he said, for the edification and instruction of his friend Lafin; and never with the intention that these minutes should be submtted to the duke of Savoye. He then enquired how the papers had fallen into the hands of the commissioners?—and stated that he had written the minute when transported with fury at the refusal of the king to appoint him governor of Bourg; that he was naturally impetuous, and feeling insulted, had strung together a list of chimerical projects, which he had never dreamed of executing. Finally, Biron pleaded the pardon which his majesty had accorded in the cloister of the Franciscan monastery of Lyons.[1] The commissioners then took leave, and

[1] De Thou, liv. 128. Vie du maréchal de Biron—Mathieu, t. 2, liv. 3. Cayet.

proceeded the following days to the examination of M. Lafin, who rode about the streets of Paris armed *cap-à-pied*, with pistols in the holster of his saddle; so alarmed was this traitor at the threats of the relatives of Biron.[1] The depositions of this Lafin told terribly against Biron: taking the famous minute of four sheets for his text, he tendered a deliberate recital of his various interviews with the duke of Savoye, Fuentes, Casale, De Bosc, the chancellor Domenic Belli, Roncas, and other ministers or agents of Spain and Savoy. He certified to all the events before related, on oath; and excused his treachery on the plea that his horror was great at the intrigues brewing to destroy a great and good prince, so that he could no longer keep silence. He stated, as before, that the agent employed by Biron to negotiate with the Spanish cabinet was one Piccotté, a refugee from Orleans; that the latter had had frequent audiences of the marshal at Dijon, Maçon, and Pont de Vaux; and that he was introduced by a monk named La Farge. That this Piccotté had been to Spain to pray Philip III. to undertake the protection of the orthodox faith in France, which the king was destroying by the subtle processes of neglect and ridicule—and intended finally to annihilate by a sudden onslaught, aided by the heretic powers of Europe. When questioned on the stipulations concluded at Como during the month of January, Lafin stated that the confederates agreed

[1] Journal du Règne de Henri IV. Lafin was mysteriously assassinated in the month of December, 1604. "Advertised, that M. de la Fin, who discovered the conspiracy of M. de Biron, has lately been poniarded in a town of Auvergne, by a gentleman who came booted into his lodging, and left him dead on the place, and slipped away again. Unknown who he was."—MS. Cotton, Vesp., F. 10. B. Museum, fol. 71.

never to accept the articles granted at Lyons to the cardinal Aldobrandini: that Biron was to have option whether he should at once take up arms against the king, or wait for a previous declaration of war from the Spanish king, which was to be made within six months; that his Catholic majesty had covenanted not to make peace with France without the consent of Biron and his allies. The treaty provided that all captured places were to be governed by Frenchmen nominated by Biron, with the exception of Marseilles, which was to be ceded as a harbour for the Spanish fleet. That the king of Spain consented to provide the confederates with the yearly sum of 1,800,000 gold crowns: that Biron was to be nominated lieutenant-general of the armies of Spain in France; and was to marry a daughter of Savoy, with the duchy of Burgundy for her dowry. Should the conspiracy fail the king of Spain covenanted to give Biron asylum in Italy or Germany; a yearly pension of 120,000 gold crowns; besides the sum of 1,200,000 gold crowns in ready money."[1] The extravagance of these stipulations, if in reality made, must at once have convinced any sober mind of the bad faith of Fuentes; and that his only object was to delude his victim, through the medium of Biron's insatiable vanity, and so involve Philip's great rival Henri Quatre in *tracasseries* which would promote the dominance of Spain, and the success of the arms of the archdukes in the Low Countries. Some writers have considered this treaty of Como altogether apocryphal—or at least, they assert that no stipulations were regularly embodied. It is averred that the king having once pardoned the marshal for his disloyal co-operation with the Savoyard foe, it

[1] De Thou—Hist. de son Temps.

was necessary to allege some high crime to procure the condemnation of Biron; for that, after having resorted to the extreme measure of presenting to the parliament a bill of high treason and attainder, the king dared not release the marshal, or inflict a lesser penalty than death. In the household expenses of Henri IV., for the year 1602, there is an entry of a sum of 3,450 livres given to M. Lafin; and the question has been asked, For what purpose was this money given—to reward disclosures, or to purchase lying evidence? If for the latter purpose, the sum is small indeed; especially as, when the trial concluded, Lafin is no more heard of, but returned to his original obscurity, laden with the odium which always clings to the informer. This Lafin was an adventurer, though sprung from a noble house;[1] he had filled inferior posts in the households of great personages, and was always indigent, suspected, and employed upon missions which no strictly honourable person would accept. The sum of 3,450 livres was not over bountiful aid, therefore, to enable this individual to present himself in suitable guise as a courtier at Fontainebleau, and to maintain him during the month he was compelled to reside in Paris. The meeting at Como is alluded to by Italian and Spanish contemporary authors as an interview at which hostile and secret measures were concerted for the overthrow of the power of Henri IV., and as such, d'Ossat relates, was viewed with infinite solicitude by the sovereign pontiff.[2] Henry himself repeatedly states his belief that a scheme of the utmost malignity was there organized against the power and

[1] M. de Lafin was brother of Henry's able ambassador to the English court, M. Beauvoir de La Noclo.

[2] Lettre 254.

influence of France. On the 12th of July Henry writes to du Fresne: "The duke de Biron has confessed his treasonable league with Savoy; he, it appears, hoped to entice from their allegiance several important towns and districts, to which, however, I find he never dared open his designs."[1] To Beaumont, his ambassador in England, the king details the various charges: he says the intrigue was badly concocted, but that it was the intent of Savoy and Spain to assail Geneva in the autumn of the year, and thus force on the campaign, resolved to attempt the dismemberment of France. "In short," writes his majesty, "Biron intended to dispose of my realm as he liked; and afterwards to play the same game with England and the Dutch Republic, as if all the world ought to tremble before his scowl."[2]

Meantime the relatives of the duke de Biron, alarmed at the serious turn affairs had taken, assembled to petition the king to manifest his royal clemency. The plea of these noblemen was that Biron was guilty of having compassed the crime of treason, though not guilty of its actual perpetration. Henry granted them audience in the gallery of the château de St. Maur, where the king sojourned at the beginning of July for a few days. The deputation consisted of Jean, marquis de St. Blancart, brother of the marshal, of Charles de Buffière Sieur de Chambarit, of the count de Roussy, brother-in-law of Biron, and of MM. de St. Angel, Gontaut de Salignac, and de Thémines. M. de la Force, another brother-in-law of Biron's, is said to have been the speaker of

[1] "Archives de Couhé Lusignan."—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

[2] MS. Bibl. Imp. F. de Brienne—MS. 38, 167 verso; also Lettres Missives de Henri IV., t. 5.

the affecting appeal made to the king. The correspondence of Henri IV., however, proves that M. de la Force, by the special command of the king, did not quit Guyenne until some time after the demise of Biron.[1] The revelations of Lafin and other testimony, but especially the deportment of the marshal,[2] seem to have greatly exasperated the king, for he answered the suit of his suppliants with unusual asperity of language. "Sire," said these noblemen, "our confidence in your clemency gives us hope that you will graciously receive our petition. Sire, the 100,000 men who have served under the standard of Biron unite with us in soliciting the pardon of the latter. We pray that this guilty man—guilty, and yet so worthy of compassion—may not be treated with the rigour of the law. You have graciously pardoned other offenders, who have yet more deeply assailed your royal rights: we pray you, therefore, that his death may not cover us your faithful servants with infamy. We know and acknowledge that Biron has sinned against the realm: his crime, however, has been mental, not actual. Prince most clement! remember the services of his father; remember his own services; think upon our own! Shall it be said that your majesty, who has magnanimously pardoned great crimes perpetrated, refuses absolution to Biron, who is guilty alone of projects which others consummated—Biron, who has served you with such noble and zealous courage! Sire, we implore you, by our tears and sighs, to have mercy not only

[1] Egerton MS. B. Museum, vol. 5, fols. 105 and 118. MS., also Lettres Missives, t. 5.

[2] "Le maréchal mangeait peu, et ne pouvait dormir; il ne sortait de sa bouche que des paroles qui offensoient Dieu et le roy."—Vie de Biron.

on this criminal, but on ourselves, the faithful subjects of your majesty!" This address pressed the king very closely: resolved not to interfere with the course of justice, Henry replied, after first commanding the cavaliers to rise from their knees:—"Never have I, messieurs, closed my ears to the prayers of my subjects; and all persons have ever found ready access to my presence. With respect to the friends and relatives of criminals, my ancestors have always refused to listen to intercessions of this nature—they have even repulsed the pleadings of brothers, fathers, and mothers! It is a well-known fact that Francis II. refused to listen to the prayers of the wife of my uncle M. de Condé. The clemency which you invoke would be cruelty rather than mercy: it is not a question of my own safety—but of the stability of this realm. If it were a personal affair, I would anticipate your prayers: but the state is concerned—for the which I have to answer to posterity. What reproaches might not my children address to me, if I allowed a crime of such virulency to go unpunished! No! I have resolved not to interfere with the award of justice. I, however, invite you to do all in your power to prove the innocence of the accused; after sentence pronounced, no intercession can be tolerated for a man convicted of high treason; neither father, son, husband, nor wife, can then have right to expect sympathy. Take care, messeigneurs, that in your zeal for this culprit you do not incur my displeasure, and the reprobation of the public! You dread that a capital sentence may brand you with infamy? I descend maternally from the count de St. Paul; and I am one of the heirs of the duke de Nemours! Their crimes, have they dishonoured me? The prince de Condé, my uncle, would have

been decapitated had Francis II. survived but one day. These personages have stamped upon me and mine no brand of infamy! The crime and the penalty of Biron will not disgrace you, provided that you continue my faithful subjects! M. St. Angel here present—whom Biron discarded from his intimacy because he refused to cabal—M. de St. Angel will testify how dearly I loved him whose pardon you now solicit. I am even more afflicted than yourself at this crime: but can any one, messieurs, allege excuses for an ingrate who has compassed the destruction of his master and benefactor?" "Sire, at any rate we have the consolation of believing that M. le Maréchal never conspired against your royal person!" exclaimed one of the noblemen present—a venture, doubtless, to test the opinion of the king on the regicidal intents of Biron before the Fort Ste. Catherine, still deposed to by M. Lafin. Henry, however, contented himself with replying—"Messieurs, do what you can to prove the innocence of the accused; I will aid your endeavours in every possible manner."[1]

It was observed that the manner of the unfortunate prisoner became more humble and subdued when informed of the result of the intervention of his kindred. "I perceive," exclaimed he, "that his majesty wills that I shall journey along the road to the scaffold!"[2] He then asked for an interview with MM. de Villeroy and Sillery, which was granted,

[1] De Thou. Vie du maréchal de Biron. Journal de Henri. IV. Mathieu—Hist. du Regne de Henri IV. Discours Historique de la Fortune et Disgrace des Favoris depuis Francois I. jusqu'a Louis XIII., quoted by Le Laboureur.—Additions aux Mém. de Castelnau.

[2] "Ha! je vois bien qu'on me veut faire tenir le chemin de la Grève!"

though the result of the visit never transpired. Biron also admitted the archbishop of Bourges; whose assistance he had before insolently rejected. A letter was about this time circulated, professing to be an exact copy of an epistle addressed by the duke to his majesty, imploring mercy in the most abject terms; and expressing Biron's willingness, provided his life was spared, to finish his days "between prison walls!" Many believed the letter genuine; and that its composition agreed with the temper of M. de Biron, which was subject to the extremes of elation or dejection. The king, nevertheless, in a letter written to M. de la Force, after the demise of the marshal, states explicitly that Biron to the last refused to solicit pardon; and also strenuously denied that he had fomented the troubles arising from the unpopular tax, la Pancarte.

Meantime the warrant for the trial of Biron decreed that he should be brought before, and sentence pronounced by *toutes Chambres assemblées*. The peers of France, nevertheless, declined to participate in the arraignment or sentence; and grounded their refusal to sit in judgment on the precedent that at the trial of the duke d'Aumale they were not called upon to give verdict. In vain it was represented that the trial of Aumale was instituted in a time of great public panic, and after the loss of several important actions; that the chief peers were then absent on military duties; and that in the case of Aumale judgment was pronounced in the absence of the accused. The peers, however, held firm—they refused to be participants in the condemnation of one hitherto considered the most valiant of their order; especially when former criminals, such as Mayenne, Guise, and even the secretary of state Villeroy himself, sat in their Chamber, in

virtue of letters of abolition granted for the crime of still more virulent treason.[1] The obduracy of the nobles was vexatious to the king; nevertheless, judicial procedures were vigorously pursued.

On Monday, July 15th, the marshal was confronted with M. Lafin, and for the first time heard the depositions made by this personage. The face of Biron, it is recorded, became pallid; a profuse perspiration issued from every pore, succeeded by a shivering fit, so intense were his emotions of rage, surprise, and distress. The marshal, when Lafin ceased, addressing M. de Rumigny, captain of the Bastille, requested permission to repose on his bed for an hour.[2] The inquiry was immediately suspended for the period named. Biron on his re-appearance was emphatically enjoined by the first president to be temperate in language and demeanour; to remember that this was a preliminary interrogatory; and that he would have opportunity for refutation and protest when brought before *la haute Chambre*. A scene, nevertheless, of a violent description ensued. The marshal gave positive denials to the principal assertions of Lafin. He bitterly reproached the latter for his perfidy, which Biron attributed to revenge—especially for the deceit Lafin had practised in deluding him before his journey to Fontainebleau—an act of wicked malice and cruelty—as being forewarned he could easily have obtained the pardon of the king. The marshal ended his tirade by asserting that if M. Renazé, secretary to Lafin, were present—who was now unfortunately incarcerated in the dungeons of the duke of Savoy—he would

[1] Journal de Henri IV. The peers had good reason to avoid sitting in judgment on their unhappy colleague, if the designs attributed to them by noted contemporaries had foundation.

[2] Vie du maréchal de Biron.—De Thou, liv. 128.

confute the lying evidence of M. Lafin. The president replied that the wish of the accused could be gratified; for Renazé had escaped from the fortress of Quiers, and was waiting outside the pleasure of the court.[1] This individual then appeared; but confirmed in every respect the testimony of Lafin. Many letters were then read by the attorney-general, addressed by the marshal to M. Lafin. One, upon which Henry desired that stress might be laid, written since the birth of the dauphin, contained the following passage:—"Since God has given a son to his majesty, and to this realm, we must forget our old projects; and if we have acted as we think uprightly until now, let us try to do still better for the future!" A recommendation of this passage to the favourable consideration of the High Court was the only mercy conceded by the king to his old favourite, and once zealous servant, from the period of Biron's arrest. The heart of the king seemed sore and alienated; and he irritably resented appeals to his compassionate favour. The marshal was treated, doubtless, with rigorous justice: the petition of his mother madame de Biron, and of his sister madame de Roussy, that counsel might be appointed to defend the duke on his appearance before the Chambers, was rejected;[2] and no personages were suffered to hold interviews with Biron in the Bastille. The wife of Rumigny, however, seems to have abounded in trifling acts of kindness and sympathy to her husband's illus-

[1] The escape of Renazé at this critical period from the fortress of Quiers attracted attention. It was surmised that M. de Savoye had connived at the evasion, as, finding his schemes impracticable, he wished that M. de Biron should be his scapegoat.

[2] De Thou, liv. 128. Madame de Roussy also presented a second petition, with no greater success.

trious prisoner, and to have softened as much as possible the severity of his confinement. M. de Rosny declined an interview with Biron, although earnestly solicited by the poor prisoner. He states, as his reasons for this refusal, that he could not offer intercession in the marshal's behalf, as the king was resolved to abandon the latter to his fate; secondly, that he deemed it politic to hold as little communication as possible with the prisoners, his name having been maliciously mentioned by Lafin in his depositions. There is little doubt but that alarm as well as indignation at Biron's misdeeds increased the severity of the king. By several contemporary authors it is insinuated that the plot had far deeper ramifications than was generally suspected; and it was discovered that many of the chief courtiers of king Henry had been inoculated with the venom of Spanish intrigue;[1] though, from motives of high expediency, the facts were not suffered to transpire either to the public or to most of the personages implicated. Besides the dukes de Bouillon and de la Tremouille—the duke de Montpensier, the constable Montmorency, the duke de Guise, and many of the chieftains of the old league were, it was said, suspected of wishing well to the movement. The scheme proposed by the subtle enemies of the reigning dynasty was alluring—the redivision of France into great hereditary fiefs; the election of the king; and the curtailment of the royal prerogative to its proportions in the days of Hugues Capet. If it be true that a plan of this

[1] Biron confessed that eighty high personages had accepted pensions from the king of Spain, though with great constancy he refused to give up their names.—MS. King's Library, 109, B. fol. 60.

magnitude was developed, the royal suspicions must have centred vividly on Montpensier; as this prince incurred a temporary disgrace soon after the signature of the treaty of Vervins, by proposing that the office of lieutenant-governor of a province should be declared hereditary, and forfeited only on attainder. The cautious Rosny says:—"The number of Biron's accomplices was great, and consisted of many of the principal personages of the court. I took upon myself to warn several persons implicated, and fortunately succeeded in inducing these to throw themselves at the feet of the king. Almost all followed my counsel: the secrecy which I promised to these persons prevents me from recording their names." The abbé Siri, and other writers of the seventeenth century, speak confidently on the extent of the conspiracy; and state that policy prevented the arraignment of personages whose arrest might have been followed by insurrections throughout the country. No documentary proofs, however, exist criminating other high personages excepting those openly concerned in Biron's felony; but the bane of France, and one of the reasons of her decline, until she became immersed in the depths of her great Revolution, was the excessive power, turbulence, and privileges of *la haute noblesse.*

The appearance of the duke de Biron before the Parliament was fixed for the 27th day of July. For several days previously the Chambers met to peruse and consider the evidence obtained at the interrogatories; also, all the correspondence given into court was read aloud by the chancellor. By dawn on the morning of the 27th the streets were lined with troops from the Bastille to the Palais. De Montigny, governor of Paris, was charged with the

transport of the prisoner. He appeared in the apartment of the marshal at five o'clock; the latter had just risen, and was attiring himself. Biron, accompanied by Montigny and Vitry, entered a coach, and was conducted to the Arsenal. There he was placed in a barge covered with an awning of tapestry.[1] The marshal took his seat between Montigny and Vitry. The boat was filled with soldiers armed with swords, and was followed by two other boats, likewise occupied by soldiers. A guard armed with bayonets and arquebuses kept the river banks. Crowds of persons had assembled to witness the passage; but the greatest decorum prevailed. The marshal landed, and entered the Palais de Justice by la Porte de la Tournelle;[2] he was then conducted to La Chambre Dorée, into the presence of his judges, consisting of the chancellor de Bellièvre and 112 members. The marshal bowed, and with composure of manner placed himself, according to the direction of Montigny, just within the bar of the Chambers. When Bellièvre opened proceedings, the duke advanced farther into the chamber, and with a pleasant and gallant air took his seat on the *sellette*, or high wooden stool, commonly occupied by criminals on their trial—an ignominy which, in the

[1] "Il fut conduit par l'Arsenal, puis entra dans un bateau, lequel avait un carré de 7 a 8 pieds, au milieu fermé d'ais de 5 pieds de haut, puis convert par-dessus de tapisserie. Dedans etoit ledit maréchal avec les sieurs de Montigny et de Vitry; par dehors et dans deux autres bateaux estoient les soldats qui le survoyent."—Vie du maréchal de Biron.

[2] Another account says: "On fit descendre le maréchal dans l'Isle du Palais, et entra par la porte du jardin de M. le premier President, d'où il fut conduit par la Chambre des Enquêtes dans la grande Chambre devant MM. de la Cour, ou il se trouva au commencement étonné."—Journal de Henri IV.

case of so high a personage, had been dispensed with. "Pardon, Messieurs," said the duke, "I cannot hear, therefore I must approach, or I must request you all to speak in a louder tone." The charges against Biron had been condensed into five points, upon each of which he was interrogated: afterwards he was permitted to address the Chambers, and defend himself upon all that had been alleged since his arrest. The five points were: 1st, the duke's treasonable conferences when in Flanders with Picotté and the archduke Albert; 2ndly, his relations with the duke of Savoy, when the latter prince visited Paris, and his negotiations to obtain the hand of a daughter of the duke; 3rdly, the duke's connivance with the duke of Savoy during the recent campaign—his treasonable communications and intents; 4thly, Biron's regicidal projects to cause the assassination of his majesty before the Fort Ste. Catherine; 5thly, the duke's instructions to Lafin, and his participation in the treaty negotiated at Como." The duke's replies consisted of mingled denial and confession. He pleaded the pardon he received at Lyons; and maintained that it was valid, although full disclosures had not then been made to his majesty. As for his intent to take the king's life, Biron totally denied the allegation; although, upon being closely pressed, he admitted that a proposition to that effect, in enigmatical language,[1] had been made

[1] "Lafin luy parlant un jour lors qu'il étoit devant le fort Ste. Catherine luy dit—'Nous serons les deux grands bardeaux qui porteront la charge sur le dos, si les palissades ne nous empeschent dedans trois jours;' que c'étoit un énigme qu'il n'entendoit que la moitié, savoir: que si ceux de Ste. Catherine ne mettoyent des palissades, ils seroyent pris dedans 3 jours. Mais quelques jours après Lafin luy dit que les deux bardeaux estoyent eux deux, qui seraient les mulets pour porter le roy au

to him by Lafin, the which he rejected with horror. The duke confessed that so great was his rage at the king's refusal to give him the government of Bourg, "*qu'il etait alors capable de tout ouyr, et de tout faire,*" against his royal master. Biron assailed the evidence of Lafin, whom he accused of horrible crimes, sorcery, magic, coining, and murder. He stated that Lafin had an image in wax of the king, which, by the agency of the Evil One, frequently shrieked out the words: "*Rex impie peribis; et sicut cera liquescit moriens!*" "I have sinned, I have sinned, with my mouth, with my ears, with my head, and a little with my pen," said the unhappy Biron, "but not so greatly as to make me an outcast from his majesty's gracious clemency. All this has come upon me for the impious and execrable oaths, taken with Lafin on the Holy Eucharist, never to reveal our intelligences." The marshal continued to harangue his judges, and to answer their interrogatories, until the hour of ten. On a sign from the chancellor, M. de Montigny and his guards then surrounded their prisoner, and led him through the garden of the first president to the boat, which had been moored off the quay. In the same lugubrious pomp Biron was conducted back to the Bastille. The spirits of the marshal, however, appeared elated; and he recounted with infinite vivacity the incidents of the morning both to M. de Vitry during the route, and to Rumigny and his gaolers after his arrival at the Bastille. He then, it is said, mimicked the voice of the chancellor; and invented a conversation for the latter with the privy-council. Afterwards Biron dined with appetite, and made facetious remarks on the knives

fort pour l'y faire perdre—ce qu'il trouva fort mauvais."—Déposition du maréchal de Biron.

brought to his table, the blades of which were rounded and blunt, in accordance with the regulations of the prison.

On Monday, July 29th, the Chambers assembled to pronounce its verdict. After a deliberation of six hours, the marshal de Biron was declared guilty of high treason, and condemned to be decapitated on the Place de Grêve, and his dignities, possessions, and lands confiscated.[1] The chancellor addressed the Chambers at length; he hinted that the death of Biron was necessary, not only for the safety of his majesty, but as a warning by which other illustrious blood might be spared. The king retired to St. Germain, leaving commands that the warrant for the execution of M. de Biron should be transmitted to him for signature: it was therefore placed before his majesty on the afternoon of Monday. The sentence was immediately published in Paris, and the rumour propagated that the execution would take place on the following day, Tuesday, July 30th. The capital rose on the news; people thronged to the carrefours and squares; the most exaggerated recitals of the crime of the condemned were current. During the night scaffolds were erected round the Place de Grêve for spectators of the expected catastrophe on the morrow. A mob of 3000 people assailed the gates of the Bastille on the following morning, to ascertain at what hour the illustrious

[1] "Il y eut des juges qui opinèrent aussi contre Lafin, l'auteur et l'instigateur de toute cette horrible intrigue; mais cet avis fut rejeté, parce que dans un crime si atroce, et qui renferme luy seul tous les autres crimes, les juges les plus sages ont toujours crus qu'il y avoit de la justice à se montrer tout à fait favorable à ceux qui se hatent d'en donner connoisance. Il se trouva beaucoup de juges qui penchoient du côté de la douceur pour M. le maréchal."—De Thou, liv. 128.

criminal would be led forth to die. This was the first intimation which the duke de Biron received that his sentence was pronounced, and his doom—that of death. The cries and wrestlings of the brutal multitude on the Place without, penetrated to his chamber. He turned pale. "My sentence is pronounced—I am a dead man!" exclaimed he,[1] falling on a chair. The execution of Biron, however, had been fixed by the king for the following day: moreover, the duke was to meet his fate privately, on a scaffold erected in the great court of the Bastille, his majesty having been pleased, on the petition of the relatives of the said Biron, so to ordain. Hope seems now to have utterly forsaken the marshal; though, by a cruel consideration, his sentence was still concealed from him. After a period given to reflection, Biron sent for M. de Baranton, lieutenant of his guard, and besought him to carry his commendations to M. de Rosny, and to implore him to intercede for his life with the king. Baranton faithfully performed his mission: the marquis was at St. Germain, and in the presence of madame de Rosny and M. Zamet the lieutenant delivered his message. So affecting was the report made by Baranton that all present shed tears; and not one person found courage to speak for some minutes. At length Rosny said, "I can neither see nor intercede for M. de Biron. Alas, it is too late! He should have told all to his majesty when at Fontainebleau—for, not having done this, he has put it out of the power

[1] Vie du maréchal de Biron. Sully, liv. 13ème. Mathieu, liv. 2. Sully is reported to have said: "Si j'eusse esté à Paris j'eusse empeché les huissiers de passer par l'Arsenal, et l'apprehension que M. le maréchal à eu du peuple n'eust pas eté!"—Vie du maréchal de Biron.

of his friends to save him. I can do nothing!"[1] The queen, however, seems courageously to have made intercession for Biron when all abandoned him; and to have besought his majesty at least to spare the life of M. de Biron. "Madame," replied Henry, "I have too great an affection for you and your son to grant your request. I cannot leave in the heart of my realm so sharp a thorn, when I have power to extract such. If M. le Maréchal has dared to conspire against me, having knowledge of my courage and might, will he not eagerly assail you and your son should my life be taken?"[2]

On the morning of Wednesday, July 31st, the chancellor, MM. de Rosny and Sillery, the first president de Harlay, and a crowd of officials of minor rank, proceeded to the Bastille at ten o'clock. At eleven, Bellièvre commanded that M. de Biron should be conducted to the chapel of the fortress, where the latter was to hear his doom officially notified.[3] Rosny then withdrew, having first fulfilled the requisite duty of governor of the Bastille, and surrendered his prisoner to his majesty's chief judge of the criminal courts. A presentiment of his approaching fate harassed the mind of the unhappy prisoner. Biron's dress was disordered, his face flushed, and his manner excited. The chancellor entered robed, pre-

[1] Vie du maréchal de Biron.

[2] Hist. de la Mère et du Fils.—Mezerai.

[3] Another relation states the fatal intelligence was received by M. de Biron in his chamber in the Bastille. "Où cette compagnie trouva le maréchal occupé à conferer trois ou quatre almanachs, considerant la lune, le jour, les signes, et autres choses appartenantes à la judiciaire."—Journal de Henri IV. M. de Pérefixe—Hist. de Henri le Grand, p. 374. states that the marshal, "Etait fort ignorant, mais extremement curieux des predictions des astrologues, devins, et autres affronteurs."

ceded by his macebearers and officials, and accompanied by two priests in canonicals, Magnan, curé de St. Nicholas des Champs, and an eloquent monk named Garnier, who was subsequently promoted to the see of Montpellier. Biron, as soon as he saw the chancellor, exclaimed, in a voice hoarse and rapid, "What, Monsieur! you have suffered me to be miserably condemned to die! Monsieur, Monsieur, you might have prevented this calamity! I summon you, and all the judges who have condemned me, to appear before the tribunal of the most High God, one year hence, to answer for this deed!"[1] He then seized the arm of Bellièvre, "Oh, what service the king of France renders to-day to the king of Spain! Monsieur, must I die? I delivered myself up, trusting in the word of the king—is there no salvation?" The duke continued for some period to rave with the fury and gestures of one distracted. When he at length paused, Bellièvre, in words of sympathy, and almost with tears, announced his doom, which the duke was to meet at five o'clock in the afternoon. The chancellor then asked for his collar and ribbon of St. Esprit, in the king's name.[2] Biron took it from his pocket, kissed the symbol, and took oath that he had never violated the statutes of the Order. He then, being somewhat calmer, inquired whether he might make a will?—to which the chancellor replied in the affirmative, promising, in the name of the king, that his bequests should be respected. Biron then addressed the curé of St.

[1] "En disant cela il frappoit fermement sur le bras de M. le chancelier, qui etoit couvert, et le maréchal tête nue en pourpoint, ayant jetté son manteau."

[2] "Le chancelier le conjura fort de penser à Dieu."—Vie du maréchal de Biron.

Nicholas, and declined his aid; having, as he said, made confession eight days previously to M. de Bourges. The chancellor then withdrew from the chapel, accompanied by M. de Sillery.

The notary Voisin next approached M. de Biron, and observed "that it was his duty to read the sentence of the court to the prisoner," and directed the duke to kneel. Biron threw himself on his knees before the altar, which he embraced with one arm. During the reading of the document the excitement of the marshal returned: when, in the enumeration of his crimes, it was stated that he had conspired against the person of the king, the duke fiercely exclaimed—"False! efface that charge!" It was then communicated that the king had been pleased to wave his right to the confiscation of the lands of Biron,[1] the ducal peerage alone being forfeited: also, that the sentence of decapitation was not to be executed in public. Biron heard this notification with indifference; his head rested on the altar, and he remained thus for some time in a kneeling attitude. When he rose it was perceived that his face was wet with tears. The duke then requested permission to make his will, which was granted. He bequeathed 150 crowns to charities; he gave one ring to his sister-in-law, madame de St. Blancart;[2] and two other very valuable rings he left to his sister, madame de Roussy. The duke made bequest of all his estates and real property to his brother, M. de St. Blancart; and left various

[1] "Quelle grace!" exclaimed Biron, "la terre de Biron ne peut être confisquée!" Ibid.—Journal de Henri IV. Moreri, Bayle—Dict. Art. Gontaut de Biron.

[2] This lady was niece to M. de Rosny, being the daughter of his eldest sister, Jacqueline de Béthune.

large sums to an illegitimate son, to whom he also gave a château near to Dijon. The personal effects, and the clothing which Biron had with him in prison, he distributed amongst his guards: the soldiers approached, many with tears streaming from their eyes, and reverently kissed the hand of "the great captain," promising to treasure his gift to the end of their lives.[1]

Biron, after this distribution, made confession to the curé de St. Nicholas, and prayed his pardon for his former rough repulse. The marshal then walked about the chapel for the space of one hour, preserving unbroken silence. At three o'clock the chancellor and the first president de Harlay again repaired to the chapel; the forms of judicial procedure being not yet vindicated. A private interview ensued; during which Biron underwent a final interrogatory. He steadily refused to inculpate any personage; he protested his innocence of actual rebellion; and stated that the designs of the court of Spain were exaggerated. Biron throughout his defence unconsciously made fatal admissions, which at any rate proved guilty collusion with the enemies of the realm. The dignitaries then bade the marshal farewell,[2] after having asked whether there were any personages whom he desired to see. Biron asked for his brothers-in-law, his own brother, and his sister,

[1] MS. King's Library B. M., 109, B. The marshal gave his purse to Baranton: it contained 150 crowns.

[2] Bellièvre said: "Voilà le jour où vous devez faire preuve de ce courage intrepide qui vous a fait affronter tant de perils: c'est surtout au dernier periode d'une vie comblée de gloire qu'il doit paroître en montrant une soumission parfaite à la volonté Divine. Demandez la humblement à Dieu: il vous l'accordera: detachez votre esprit de toutes les pensées de la terre, et tournez le entierement vers le Ciel."—De Thou, liv. 128.

madame de Roussy—but was informed that they had all quitted Paris the previous day. The intervening hour Biron employed in conversation, and in salutations. He desired to be commended to M. de Rosny, to the dukes de Mayenne and d'Aiguillon. He expressed a desire that his youngest brother should be appointed page to the dauphin, son of his august mistress queen Marie. He also sent a message of farewell to the count d'Auvergne, his fellow-prisoner. The latter was quite prostrated with dread and horror. M. d'Auvergne returned his affectionate commendations, and expressed his regret at the duke's sorrowful fate—he also spontaneously promised to adopt the young son of Biron, and to protect the child's mother.[1]

Five o'clock, the hour fixed for the execution of Biron, at length gloomily tolled—and as the last stroke of the great clock of the Bastille sounded, M. de Rumigny, M. de Vitry captain of the royal guards, and the lieutenant of Montigny governor of Paris, followed by a company of soldiers, entered the chapel. "Monsieur," said one of these personages, "it is time now to descend with us, that you may ascend to God!" The duke stepped forward with dignity and declared himself ready to follow them. He wore a suit of grey satin, a cloak of black velvet, and carried a hat adorned with white and black plumes. On the green before the Bastille a scaffold had been erected five feet high: it was undraped, and approached by rough steps. Around troops were drawn up in close rank; while strong bodies of arquebusiers occupied the green

[1] Vie du maréchal de Biron. Mathieu, liv. 2. Eloge du maréchal de Biron—Le Laboureur, Additions aux Mém. de Castelnau.

under arms. The chapel bells tolled mournfully; while many prisoners and officials watched the advance of the procession, shedding tears for the approaching miserable fate of so valiant and popular a nobleman. The duke was received, close to the scaffold, by the provost of the high court, who was on horseback, bearing in his hand his wand. On the scaffold stood the executioner and his assistants, the notary of the high court, and the curé de St. Nicholas. As Biron gazed on these ghastly preparations his fortitude forsook him. He, however, knelt at the foot of the ladder, and thus received final absolution. On rising, the eyes of the unfortunate man wandered wildly round. "Oh!" exclaimed he, pointing to the companies of musketeers—"Oh! for a musket ball through my body! Is there no mercy?" He was then assisted to ascend the steps on to the scaffold. The warrant for execution was next produced and read by the notary Voisin; the marshal again fiercely denying that he had conspired against the life of the king. Biron then joined in prayer with the curé Magnan. A handkerchief being then given to him by the executioner, he bound it round his eyes and knelt. On hearing the swift step of the headsman behind him, the marshal started from his kneeling attitude, and tearing the handkerchief from his eyes, exclaimed, "God! is there no pardon—no mercy?" and in his agony Biron commenced repeating rapidly to himself the word, "Minime! Minime!" which was supposed to refer to his confessor at Dijon, a monk of the order of Minimes; who told the marshal that if Lafin revealed that which they had, with such awful oaths, sworn to keep secret, the fate of the former would be eternal perdition, and that of Biron salvation. Anxious to terminate so harrowing a

spectacle, the authorities present conferred together, and calling the executioner, authorized him to bind the criminal, to cut the collar of his doublet, and to force him into the requisite posture to receive the stroke—the former being preliminaries usually adopted, but which, in the case of the marshal, had, at his own earnest prayer, been dispensed with. The face of Biron, however, glared with fury at the approach of the headsman and his assistants: for the terror and excitement of his position were evidently fast depriving him of reason. "Ah! who dares approach me?" said he. "A finger shall not be laid on my person! or I swear I will strangle every person present!"[1] After an interval of silence, the marshal called to M. Barenton,[2] the officer to whom he had intrusted his message to Rosny, and, with a face still vividly suffused, requested him to bind his eyes. Barenton complied; but the duke again snatched the handkerchief from his brow, exclaiming, "Heaven! let me gaze on the sky once more!" When the handkerchief was re-adjusted, Biron called impetuously to the headsman, "Haste! haste!" In a second the sword of the executioner was poised, and just as the unhappy marshal was again rising, the blow fell, and the head rebounded from the scaffold,[3] and dropped into the midst of the horrified spectators. The body was immediately covered with a

[1] "Que l'on ne m'approche; je ne scaurois l'endurer! et si l'on me met en fougue, j'estrangleray la moitié de ce qui est icy!"

[2] "Enfin il appella M. de Baranton qui lui banda les yeux et troussa ses cheveux; puis il dit au bourreau. 'Despeche, despeche!' Lequel pour l'amuser luy dit: 'Monsieur il faut dire vostre In Manus.'"—MS. King's Library, 109, fol. 60, et seq. Mathieu, Cayet.

[3] "Le maréchal eut deux doigts offensés de l'epée du bourreau, comme il portait la main pour se debander pour la troisième fois."—Journal du Règne de Henri IV.

pall of black cloth: the same evening, at dusk hour, it was placed in a leaden coffin, and at midnight interred in a vault constructed in the nave of the parish church of St. Paul.[1]

Thus miserably perished the valiant duc de Biron. His exaggerated notions of his prowess and importance,[2] and his unquenchable vanity, acted upon by subtle and designing men, led to his ruin. Unstable, and without moral or political principle, Biron aspired to rule over the councils of his royal master, whose crown he gloriously upheld by military service. The duke's confident deportment while under arrest, and his lamentable irresolution on the scaffold in the presence of death, portray his character. It must always be a matter of regret that Henri Quatre, then at the summit of might and prosperity, could not, after Biron's condemnation, discern a way, consistent with the safety of the state, to save the life of an old and once devoted servant. Soon the fickle Parisians sang:—

"L'an six cent et deux en Juillet
Ou vit le grand Biron dechoir,
Non pour le mal qu'il avoit fait,
Mais pour celuy qu'il voulait faire!"

That the king's feelings were intensely imbittered,

[1] "Cette enterrement fut sans ceremonie, estant seulement accompagné de 6 prêtres, et de quelques autres personnes."

[2] "A peine pouvait il souffrir que l'on fit part de la gloire des bons succès à Henri le Grand, et il menacoit les historiens qui ne s'accommodaient pas à sa vanité—Bayle. Ayant vu un discours de Mathieu sur les causes et les effects des longues guerres entre la maison de France et d'Autriche, croyant qu'on ne parlait pas de lui si souvent ni si hautement qu'il voulait, il s'en plaignit au chancelier, et decouvrit plus ouvertement sa colère à Du Vic ambassadeur en Suisse, adjoutant des cruels menaces contre l'auteur."—Hist. de la Paix—Mathieu, liv. 3.

there is proof in the letter which he wrote two days subsequent to the duke's execution, to his ambassador in England, M. de Beaumont Harlay. The king writes: "I send you the *procès verbal* of the execution of the maréchal de Biron, which at the request of his relatives was done within the precincts of the Bastille. The said Biron showed himself unworthy of this favour, for he refused to confess his crime; and demonstrated more concern for his domestic affairs, than to discharge the debt of reparation which he owed to me and to his country. His fury and vanity beset him to the last moment,[1] attended by so violent a demonstration of animosity towards myself, that I have reason to thank God that he has delivered me from such a disloyal subject. He, moreover, gave us to understand that he knew the truth of all that he denied. He exculpated the king of Spain and his ministers; the duke of Savoye and his servants; the count d'Auvergne and the baron de Lux! But, in seeking to shield his accomplices, he in reality accused them; for his denials were evidently so forced and affected, that we concluded them to be given in deference to the opinion of certain theologians of the age—who forbid criminals condemned to suffer, under pain of damnation, to accuse or betray their accomplices. The said Biron, therefore, asserted that I commanded his death solely because he was a faithful and true Catholic; nevertheless, it was discovered that he was ignorant of, and could not repeat, his *paternoster* or his *credo*, so badly was he instructed in our faith! The curé of St. Nicholas and the doctor Garnier assisted him

[1] The Sieur Gillot, in a letter addressed to Scaliger, gives in detail the violent speeches and gestures of Biron when on the scaffold.—Lettres Françoises, à Scaliger—quoted by Bayle.

in his agony; but returned very little edified; as the said Biron made an end rather brutal than Christian.[1] I have, nevertheless, given directions for his interment in the church of St. Paul; and have permitted his body to be conveyed thither by a great concourse of people, who attended more out of curiosity than to do honour to this said Biron." [2]

This letter does not honour the character of Henry IV.; whatever might be the sins of Biron, the king shows unfeeling forgetfulness of the personal devotion and glorious service once rendered. It must, however, be remembered that Henry had offered the marshal de Biron pardon on confession: and had even pressed such on him with tears. Solemn warning had likewise been given to Biron, that if cognizance of his crime was taken by the tribunal of the nation, the safety and honour of the crown, still menaced by similar enterprises, must compel the royal ratification of such award.

During the few days subsequent to the death of Biron, people flocked to visit his tomb; some to sprinkle the grave with holy water; others to weep, to breathe vows of vengeance, and to plot fresh combinations. The government deemed it prudent not to interfere with this demonstration. The king, however, gave cold reception to such pilgrims;[3] and

[1] The words of the king are: "Le curé de la paroisse de St. Nicholas, et le docteur Garnier l'ayant assisté et consolé en cette agonie, en sont retournez très mal edifiez, pour avoir fait une fin plus brutale que chrestienne, à mon très grand regret."

[2] Lettre du Roi à M. de Beaumont.—Bibl. Imp. Fr. de Brienne, vol. 38, fol. 193. Lettres Missives—edited by M. Berger de Xivrey, t. 5.

[3] The countess de Guiche, Antoinette de Daillon de Lude, and the viscount Sardini (the latter being a Lucchese adventurer, and friend of Zamet) were amongst the mourners

commanded his secretaries to continue diligently their investigations into the facts of the conspiracy; while mandates were despatched commanding the presence of the dukes de Bouillon and de la Tremouille, who each had taken refuge within his government. Revelations of great moment came to light through the zeal of MM. de Rosny and de Villeroy; so that, as the king wrote to his ambassador in London, "if the guilt of M. de Biron was proved before his death, subsequent investigations more than justified the righteousness of his award."[1] For long afterwards, when king Henry wished to affirm a fact with especial fervour, his majesty used the words—"CELA EST AUSSI VRAI, QU'IL EST VRAI QUE LE DUC DE BIRON ETAIT TRAITRE!"

at the tomb of Biron. The king sent for these personages, and said: "Qu'il etait defendu de ce faire à un traitre, et criminel de Leze Majesté!"

[1] "Le dict de Biron à esté puny par justice, comme il meritoit, toutes les formes requises et accoustumées d'estre observées en pareil cas y ont esté gardées: et vous diray que son crime a esté encore mieux prouvé et verifié après sa mort que auparavant."—Lettre du roy à M. de Beaumont. Fonds Brienne, MS. 98, fol. 333. Henry, however, in a letter written to M. de la Tour, his ambassador in Scotland, acknowledges that the conspiracy, on further investigation, seemed to be not so deeply rooted as was at first supposed; "J'ai reconnu par l'issue du procés de M. de Biron qu'il avoit eu plus de volonté de mal faire que de pouvoir de mal faire—s'etant fait fort d'embarquer avec luy plusieurs personnes de mon royaume auxquelles non seulement il n'en avoit encore parlé, mais n'eut osé entreprendre de le faire. Il en useit aussi pour magnifier et faire valoir davantage sa personne et son credit."—Archives de M. Eugène Renaud des Meloizes—Lettres Missives, t. 5.

THE END.

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